

THE
ODYSSEY OF HOMER,

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM COWPER.

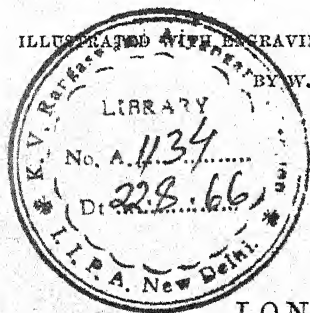
EDITED BY

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POET LAUREATE, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL, AFTER DRAWINGS

BY W. HARVEY.



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MDCCCLV.



PLATES IN THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

1. VIEW OF ITHACA	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present volume concludes an edition of Cowper's Works, which the sanction of his still surviving administratrix, Mrs. BODHAM, and the access which the Editor has obtained to every collection of the Poet's letters, has enabled him to render as complete as it can be made from any known materials. He is obliged to the Rev. Egerton Bagot for permitting him to inspect the letters addressed to his father, Cowper's earliest correspondent, and the only one of his early friends who sought him in his retirement. To Mr. Jekyll he is obliged for access to those addressed to Mr. Hill. Mrs. Charlotte Smith favoured him with the letter to her mother, who in her own generation was not surpassed as a novelist, nor equalled as a poetess. From his old friend Mr. Cottle the two letters to Mr. Churchey, were obtained, the Welch attorney¹, who sent Cowper his verses to revise, and obligingly asked,

" Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale ?"

He has also to thank Mr. Meek for entrusting him with Cowper's interleaved and annotated copy of the *Paradise Lost*, purchased by that gentleman at the sale of Hayley's Library.

¹ Vol. i. p. 401. Vol. iii. p. 375.

A mistake which Hayley has made, and which Mr. Grimshawe has repeated, it is proper to correct in this place. They have stated that Cowper died intestate,—whereas he left a will,—and such a one, that though its provisions had been nullified by the lapse of time, and the death of the principal legatee, it certainly would not have been withheld, either from, or by his first biographer, had not Lady Hesketh wished as much as possible to withhold every thing relating to his narrow circumstances, or his malady, both which it will be seen are alluded to with much feeling in this affecting document.

Keswick, Aug. 12, 1837.

EXTRACTED FROM THE REGISTER OF THE PREROGATIVE
COURT OF CANTERBURY.

I W^M. COWPER, of Olney, in the county of Bucks, do make this my last Will and Testament. I give to Mrs. Mary Unwin the sum of three hundred pounds, or whatever sum shall be standing in my name in the books of the Bank of England at the time of my decease. I give to Mr. Joseph Hill, of Great Queen Street, whatever money of mine he may have in his hands, arising from the bond of my Chambers in the Temple, or may be due for the same at the time of my decease: and my desire is, that such money as he may have received on my account in the way of contribution, and not remitted to me, may be returned to those who gave it, with the best acknowledgements I have it in my power to render them for their kindness. I have written this with my own hand, and the contents may sufficiently prove that I am in my senses.

MAY 20, 1777.

W^M. COWPER.

EIGHTEENTH AUG. 1800.

ON which day appeared personally Theodosia Hill and Frances Hill, both of Reading in the county of Berks, spinsters, and jointly and severally made oath that they knew and were well acquainted with William Cowper, formerly of the Temple, London, afterwards of Olney in the county of Bucks, but late of East Dereham in the county of Norfolk, Esquire, deceased, and having frequently seen him write and subscribe his name, are thereby become well acquainted with his manner and character of hand-writing and subscription; and having now carefully viewed and perused the paper writing hereto annexed, purporting to be and containing the last Will and Testament of the said deceased, beginning thus, "I Wm. Cowper, of Olney, in the county of Bucks, do make this my last Will and Testament," and ending thus, "I have written this with my own hand, and the contents may sufficiently prove that I am in my senses," and thus subscribed, "Wm. Cowper," they the appearers do verily and in their consciences believe the whole series and contents of the said paper writing, beginning, ending, and subscribing as aforesaid, to be all of the proper hand-writing and subscription of him the said William Cowper, Esquire, deceased. THEO. HILL. FRANCES HILL.—Same day the said Theodosia Hill and Frances Hill were duly sworn to the truth of this affidavit, before me, PH. NIND, Commissioner.

ON the sixth day of September, in the year of our Lord 1800, administration with the will annexed, of all and singular the goods, chattels, and credits of William Cowper, formerly of the Temple, London, afterwards of Olney in the county of Bucks, but late of East Dereham in the county of Norfolk, Esquire, deceased, was granted to Dame Harriet Hesketh, widow, the cousin german and one of the next of kin of the said deceased, she having been first sworn by Commissioner duly to administer, no executor or residuary legatee being named in the said will.

ON the twenty-sixth day of November, 1807, administration with the will annexed, of the goods, chattels, and credits of William Cowper, formerly of the Temple, London, afterwards

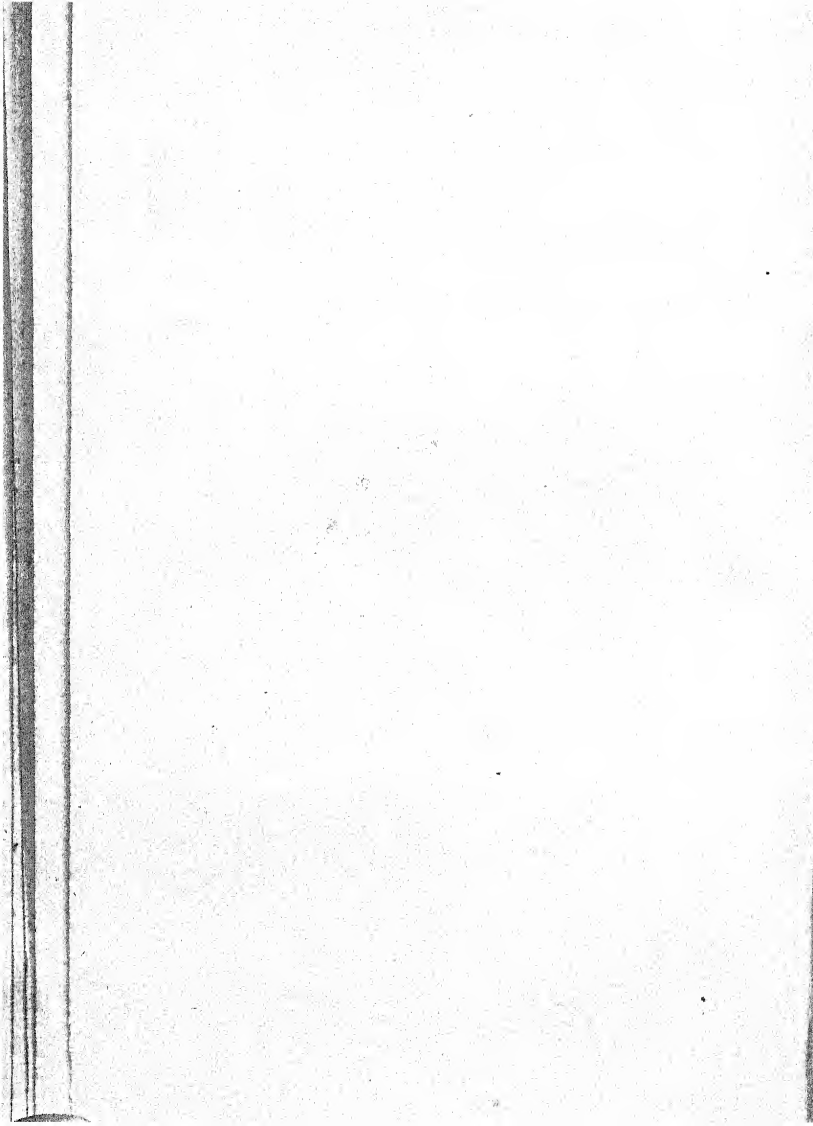
of Olney in the county of Bucks, but late of East Dereham in the county of Norfolk, Esquire, a bachelor, deceased, left unadministered by Dame Harriet Hesketh, widow, deceased, whilst living, the cousin german and one of the next of kin of the said deceased, was granted to Anne Bodham, widow, the cousin german also and one other of the next of kin of the said deceased, having been first sworn by Commissioner duly to administer, no executor or residuary legatee being named in the said will.

CHAS. DYNELEY.	} Deputy Registrars.
JOHN IGGULDEN.	
W. F. GOSTLING.	

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THE
ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

In a council of the Gods, Minerva calls their attention to Ulysses, still a wanderer. They resolve to grant him a safe return to Ithaca. Minerva descends to encourage Telemachus, and in the form of Mentes directs him in what manner to proceed. Throughout this book the extravagance and profligacy of the suitors are occasionally suggested.

MUSE, make the man thy theme, for shrewdness famed
And genius versatile, who far and wide
A Wanderer, after Ilium overthrown,
Discovered various cities, and the mind
And manners learn'd of men in lands remote. 5
He numerous woes, on Ocean toss'd, endured,
Anxious to save himself, and to conduct
His followers to their home ; yet all his care
Preserved them not ; they perish'd self-destroy'd
By their own fault ; infatuate ! who devour'd 10
The oxen of the all-o'erseeing Sun,
And, punish'd for that crime, return'd no more.
Daughter divine of Jove, these things record,
As it may please thee, even in our ears.

The rest, all those who had perdition 'scaped 15
By war or on the Deep, dwelt now at home ;
Him only, of his country and his wife
Alike desirous, in her hollow grots
Calypso, Goddess beautiful, detain'd

Wooing him to her arms. But when, at length, 20
 (Many a long year elapsed,) the year arrived
 Of his return (by the decree of Heaven)
 To Ithaca, not even then had he,
 Although surrounded by his people, reach'd
 The period of his sufferings and his toils. 25
 Yet all the Gods, with pity moved, beheld
 His woes, save Neptune; He alone with wrath
 Unceasing and implacable pursued
 Godlike Ulysses to his native shores.
 But Neptune, now, the Æthiopians sought, 30
 (The Æthiopians, utmost of mankind,
 These Eastward situate, those toward the West,)
 Call'd to an hecatomb of bulls and lambs.
 There sitting, pleas'd he banquetted; the Gods
 In Jove's abode, meantime, assembled all, 35
 'Midst whom the Sire of heaven and earth began.
 For he recalled to mind Ægisthus slain
 By Agamemnon's celebrated son
 Orestes, and retracing in his thought
 That dread event, the Immortals thus address'd. 40
 Alas! how prone are human-kind to blame
 The Powers of Heaven! From us, they say, proceed
 The ills which they endure, yet more than Fate
 Herself inflicts, by their own crimes incur.
 So now Ægisthus, by no force constrain'd 45
 Of Destiny, Atrides' wedded wife
 Took to himself, and him at his return
 Slew, not unwarn'd of his own dreadful end
 By us; for we commanded Hermes down
 The watchful Argicide, who bade him fear 50
 Alike, to slay the King, or woo the Queen:
 For that Atrides' son Orestes, soon
 As grown mature, and eager to assume
 His sway imperial, should avenge the deed.
 So Hermes spake, but his advice moved not 55
 Ægisthus, on whose head the whole arrear
 Of vengeance heap'd, at last, hath therefore fallen.
 Whom answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
 Oh Jove, Saturnian Sire, o'er all supreme!
 And well he merited the death he found; 60

So perish all who shall, like him, offend.
But with a bosom anguish-rent I view
Ulysses, hapless Chief, who from his friends
Remote, affliction hath long time endured
In yonder woodland isle, the central boss
Of Ocean. That retreat a Goddess holds,
Daughter of sapient Atlas, who the abyss
Knows to its bottom, and the pillars high
Himself upbears which separate earth from heaven.
His daughter, there, the sorrowing Chief detains,
And ever with smooth speech insidious seeks
To wean his heart from Ithaca ; meantime
Ulysses, happy might he but behold
The smoke ascending from his native land,
Death covets. Canst thou not, Olympian Jove!
At last relent ? Hath not Ulysses oft
With victims slain amid Achaia's fleet
Thee gratified while yet at Troy he fought ?
How hath he then so deep incensed thee, Jove ?
To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
What word hath pass'd thy lips, Daughter beloved ?
Can I forget Ulysses ? Him forget
So noble, who in wisdom all mankind
Excels, and who hath sacrificed so oft
To us whose dwelling is the boundless heaven !
Earth-circling Neptune—He it is whose wrath
Pursues him ceaseless for the Cyclops' sake
Polypheme, strongest of the giant race,
Whom of his eye Ulysses hath deprived.
For Him, Thoösa bore, Nymph of the sea
From Phorcys sprung, by Ocean's mighty power
Impregnated in caverns of the Deep.
E'er since that day, the Shaker of the shores,
Although he slay him not, yet devious drives
Ulysses from his native isle afar.
Yet come—in full assembly his return
Contrive we now, both means and prosperous end ;
So Neptune shall his wrath remit, whose power
In contest with the force of all the Gods
Exerted single, can but strive in vain.
To whom Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed.

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Oh Jupiter! above all Kings enthroned!
 If the Immortals ever-blest ordain
 That wise Ulysses to his home return,
 Dispatch we then Hermes the Argicide, 105
 Our messenger, hence to Ogygia's isle,
 Who shall inform Calypso, nymph divine,
 Of this our fix'd resolve, that to his home
 Ulysses, toil-enduring Chief, repair.
 Myself will hence to Ithaca, meantime, 110
 His son to animate, and with new force
 Inspire, that (the Achaians all convened
 In council,) he may, instant, bid depart
 The suitors from his home, who, day by day,
 His numerous flocks and fatted herds consume. 115
 And I will send him thence to Sparta forth,
 And into sandy Pylus, there to hear
 (If hear he may) some tidings of his Sire,
 And to procure himself a glorious name.
 This said, her golden sandals to her feet 120
 She bound, ambrosial, which o'er all the earth
 And o'er the moist flood waft her fleet as air;
 Then, seizing her strong spear pointed with brass,
 In length and bulk and weight a matchless beam,
 With which the Jove-born Goddess levels ranks 125
 Of Heroes, against whom her anger burns,
 From the Olympian summit down she flew,
 And on the threshold of Ulysses' hall
 In Ithaca, and within his vestibule
 Apparent stood; there, grasping her bright spear, 130
 Mentès¹ she seem'd, the hospitable Chief
 Of Taphos' isle. She found the haughty throng
 The suitors; they before the palace gate
 With ivory cubes sported, on numerous hides
 Reclined of oxen which themselves had slain. 135
 The heralds and the busy menials there
 Minister'd to them; these their mantling cups
 With water slaked; with bibulous sponges those
 Made clean the tables, set the banquet on,

¹ We are told that Homer was under obligations to Mentès, who had frequently given him a passage in his ship to different countries which he wished to see, for which reason he has here immortalized him.

And portion'd out to each his plenteous share. 140
Long ere the rest Telemachus himself
Mark'd her, for sad amid them all he sat,
Pourtraying in deep thought contemplative
His noble Sire, and questioning if yet
Perchance the Hero might return to chase 145
From all his palace that imperious herd,
To his own honour lord of his own home.
Amid them musing thus, sudden he saw
The Goddess, and sprang forth, for he abhorr'd
To see a guest's admittance long delay'd; 150
Approaching eager her right hand he seized.
The brazen spear took from her, and in words
With welcome wing'd Minerva thus address'd.
Stranger, all hail! to share our cordial love
Thou comest; the banquet finish'd, thou shalt next 155
Inform me wherefore thou hast here arrived.
So saying, toward the spacious hall he moved,
Followed by Pallas, and, arriving soon
Beneath the lofty roof, placed her bright spear
Within a pillar's cavity, long time 160
The armoury where many a spear had stood,
Bright weapons of his own illustrious Sire.
Then, leading her toward a footstool'd throne
Magnificent, which first he overspread
With linen, there he seated her, apart 165
From that rude throng, and for himself disposed
A throne of various colours at her side,
Lest, stunn'd with clamour of the lawless band,
The new-arrived should loth perchance to eat,
And that more free he might the stranger's ear 170
With questions of his absent Sire address.
And now a maiden charged with golden ewer,
And with an argent laver, pouring first
Pure water on their hands, supplied them, next,
With a resplendent table, which the chaste 175
Directress of the stores furnished with bread
And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
Then, in his turn, the sewer² with savoury meats

² Milton uses the word—

———— Sewers and seneschals.

Dish after dish, served them, of various kinds,
 And golden cups beside the chargers placed, 180
 Which the attendant herald fill'd with wine.
 Ere long, in rush'd the suitors, and the thrones
 And couches occupied, on all whose hands
 The heralds pour'd pure water; then the maids
 Attended them with bread in baskets heap'd, 185
 And eager they assail'd the ready feast.
 At length, when neither thirst nor hunger more
 They felt unsatisfied, to new delights
 Their thoughts they turn'd, to song and sprightly dance,
 Enlivening sequel of the banquet's joys. 190
 An herald, then to Phemius' hand consign'd
 His beauteous lyre; he through constraint regaled
 The suitors with his song, and while the chords
 He struck in prelude to his pleasant strains,
 Telemachus his head inclining nigh 195
 To Pallas' ear, lest others should his words
 Witness, the blue-eyed Goddess thus bespake.
 My inmate and my friend! far from my lips
 Be every word that might displease thine ear!
 The song—the harp,—what can they less than charm 200
 These wantons? who the bread unpurchas'd eat
 Of one whose bones on yonder continent
 Lie mouldering, drench'd by all the showers of heaven,
 Or roll at random in the billowy deep.
 Ah! could they see him once to his own isle 205
 Restored, both gold and raiment they would wish
 Far less, and nimbleness of foot instead.
 But He, alas! hath by a wretched fate
 Past question perish'd, and what news soe'er
 We hear of his return, kindles no hope 210
 In us, convinced that he returns no more.
 But answer undissembling; tell me true;
 Who art thou? whence? where stands thy city? where
 Thy father's mansion? In what kind of ship
 Camest thou? Why steer'd the mariners their course 215
 To Ithaca, and of what land are they?
 For that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.
 This also tell me, hast thou now arrived

New to our isle, or wast thou heretofore
My father's guest ? since many to our house 220
Resorted in those happier days, for he
Drew powerful to himself the hearts of all.

Then Pallas thus, Goddess cœrulean-ey'd.
I will with all simplicity of truth
Thy questions satisfy. Behold in me 225
Mentes, the offspring of a Chief renown'd
In war, Anchialus ; and I rule, myself,
An island race, the Taphians oar-expert.

With ship and mariners I now arrive,
Seeking a people of another tongue 230
Athwart the gloomy flood, in quest of brass
For which I barter steel, ploughing the waves
To Temesa. My ship beneath the woods
Of Neïus, at yonder field that skirts

Your city, in the haven Rhethrus rides. 235

We are hereditary guests ; our Sires
Were friends long since ; as, when thou seest him next,
The Hero old Laertes will avouch,

Of whom, I learn, that he frequents no more
The city now, but in sequester'd scenes 240

Dwells sorrowful, and by an ancient dame
With food and drink supplied oft as he feels
Refreshment needful to him, while he creeps
Between the rows of his luxuriant vines.

But I have come drawn hither by report, 245

Which spake thy Sire arrived, though still it seems
The adverse Gods his homeward course retard.

For not yet breathless lies the noble Chief,
But in some island of the boundless flood
Resides a prisoner, by barbarous force 250
Of some rude race detain'd reluctant there.

And I will now foreshow thee what the Gods
Teach me, and what, though neither augur skill'd
Nor prophet, I yet trust shall come to pass.

He shall not, henceforth, live an exile long 255
From his own shores, no, not although in bands
Of iron held, but will ere long contrive
His own return ; for in expedients, fram'd
With wondrous ingenuity, he abounds.

But tell me true ; art thou, in stature such, 260
 Son of himself Ulysses ? for thy face
 And eyes bright-sparkling, strongly indicate
 Ulysses in thee. Frequent have we both
 Conversed together thus, thy Sire and I,
 Ere yet he went to Troy, the mark to which 265
 So many princes of Achaia steer'd.
 Him since I saw not, nor Ulysses me.

To whom, Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Stranger ! I tell thee true ; my mother's voice
 Affirms me his, but, since no mortal knows 270
 His derivation, I affirm it not.
 Would I had been son of some happier sire,
 Ordain'd in calm possession of his own
 To reach the verge of life. But now, report
 Proclaims me his, whom I of all mankind 275
 Unhappiest deem.—Thy question is resolved.

Then answer thus Pallas blue-ey'd return'd.
 From no ignoble race, in future days,
 The Gods shall prove thee sprung, whom so endow'd
 With every grace Penelope hath borne. 280
 But tell me true. What festival is this ?
 This throng,—whence are they ? wherefore hast thou need
 Of such a multitude ? Behold I here
 A banquet, or a nuptial feast ? for these
 Meet not by contribution³ to regale, 285
 With such brutality and din they hold
 Their riotous banquet ! A wise man and good
 Arriving, now, among them, at the sight
 Of such enormities would much be wroth.

To whom replied Telemachus discreet. 290
 Since, stranger ! thou hast ask'd, learn also this.
 While yet Ulysses with his people dwelt,
 His presence warranted the hope that here
 Virtue should dwell and opulence ; but Heaven
 Hath cast for us, at length, a different lot, 295
 And he is lost, as never man before.

³ *Ἐσάρος*, a convivial meeting, at which every man paid his proportion, at least contributed something ; but it seems to have been a meeting at which strict sobriety was observed, else Pallas would not have inferred from the noise and riot of this, that it was not such a one.

For I should less lament even his death,
Had he among his friends at Ilium fallen,
Or in the arms of his companions died,
Troy's siege accomplish'd. Then his tomb the Greeks 300
Of every tribe had built, and for his son,
He had immortal glory achiev'd ; but now,
By harpies torn inglorious, beyond reach
Of eye or ear he lies ; and hath to me
Grief only, and unceasing sighs bequeath'd. 305
Nor mourn I for his sake alone ; the Gods
Have plann'd for me still many a woe beside ;
For all the rulers of the neighbour isles,
Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus, others also, rulers here 310
In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek
In marriage, and my household stores consume.
But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd
Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
To end them ; they my patrimony waste. 315
Meantime, and will not long spare even me.
To whom, with deep commiseration pang'd,
Pallas replied. Alas ! great need hast thou
Of thy long-absent father to avenge
These numerous wrongs ; for could he now appear 320
There, at yon portal, arm'd with helmet, shield,
And grasping his two spears, such as when first
I saw him drinking joyous at our board,
From Ilus son of Mermeris, who dwelt
In distant Ephyre, just then return'd, 325
(For thither also had Ulysses gone
In his swift bark, seeking some poisonous drug
Wherewith to taint his brazen arrows keen,
Which drug through fear of the eternal Gods
Ilus refused him, and my father free 330
Gave to him, for he loved him past belief ;)
Could now, Ulysses, clad in arms as then,
Mix with these suitors, short his date of life
To each, and bitter should his nuptials prove.
But these events, whether he shall return 335
To take just vengeance under his own roof,
Or whether not, lie all in the Gods' lap.

Meantime I counsel thee, thyself to think
 By what means likeliest thou shalt expel
 These from thy doors. Now mark me : close attend. 340
 To-morrow, summoning the Grecian Chiefs
 To council, speak to them, and call the Gods
 To witness that solemnity. Bid go
 The suitors hence, each to his own abode.
 Thy mother—if her purpose be resolved 345
 On marriage, let her to the house return
 Of her own potent father, who, himself,
 Shall furnish forth her matrimonial rites,
 And ample dower, such as it well becomes
 A darling daughter to receive, bestow. 350
 But hear me now ; thyself I thus advise.
 The prime of all thy ships preparing, mann'd
 With twenty rowers, voyage hence to seek
 Intelligence of thy long-absent Sire.
 Some mortal may inform thee, or a word⁴, 355
 Perchance, by Jove directed (safest source
 Of notice to mankind) may reach thine ear.
 First voyaging to Pylus, there enquire
 Of noble Netsor ; thence to Sparta tend,
 To question Menelaus amber-hair'd, 360
 Latest arrived of all the host of Greece.
 There should'st thou learn that still thy father lives,
 And hope obtain of his return, although
 Distress'd, thou wilt be patient yet a year.
 But should'st thou there hear tidings that he breathes 365
 No longer, to thy native isle return'd,
 First heap his tomb ; then with such pomp perform
 His funeral rites as his great name demands,
 And make thy mother's spousals, next, thy care.
 These duties satisfied, deliberate last 370
 Whether thou shalt these troublers of thy house
 By stratagem, or by assault, destroy :
 For thou art now no child, nor longer mayest
 Sport like one. Hast thou not the proud report
 Heard, how Orestes hath renown acquired 375

⁴ "Οσσα—a word spoken, with respect to the speaker, casually ; but with reference to the inquirer supposed to be sent for his information by the especial appointment and providential favour of the Gods.

With all mankind his father's murderer
Ægisthus slaying, the deceiver base
Who slaughter'd Agamemnon ? Oh my friend !
(For with delight thy vigorous growth I view,
And just proportion,) be thou also bold, 380
And merit praise from ages yet to come.
But I will to my vessel now repair,
And to my mariners, whom, absent long,
I may perchance have troubled. Weigh thou well
My counsel ; let not my advice be lost. 385

To whom Telemachus discreet replied,
Stranger ! thy words bespeak thee much my friend,
Who, as a father teaches his own son,
Has taught me, and I never will forget.
But, though in haste thy voyage to pursue, 390
Yet stay, that in the bath refreshing first
Thy limbs now weary, thou may'st sprightlier seek
Thy gallant bark, charged with some noble gift
Of finish'd workmanship, which thou shalt keep
As my memorial ever ; such a boon 395
As men confer on guests whom much they love.

Then Pallas thus, Goddess cœrulean-eyed.
Retard me not, for go I must ; the gift
Which liberal thou desirest to bestow,
Give me at my return, that I may bear 400
The treasure home ; and, in exchange, thyself
Expect some gift equivalent from me.

She spake, and as with eagle-wings upborne,
Vanish'd incontinent, but him inspired
With daring fortitude, and on his heart 405
Dearer remembrance of his Sire impress'd
Than ever. Conscious of the wondrous change,
Amazed he stood, and in his secret thought
Revolving all, believed his guest a God.
The youthful Hero to the suitors then 410
Repair'd ; they silent, listen'd to the song
Of the illustrious Bard ; he the return
Deplorable of the Achaian host
From Ilium by command of Pallas, sang.
Penelope, Icarius' daughter, mark'd 415
Meantime the song celestial, where she sat

In the superior palace ; down she came,
 By all the numerous steps of her abode ;
 Not sole, for two fair handmaids follow'd her.
 She then, divinest of her sex, arrived

420

In presence of that lawless throng, beneath
 The portal of her stately mansion stood,
 Between her maidens, and with lucid veil
 Her lovely features mantling. There profuse
 She wept, and thus the sacred bard bespake.

425

PheMIUS ! for many a sorrow-soothing strain
 Thou know'st beside, such as exploits record
 Of Gods and men, the poet's frequent theme ;
 Give them of those a song, and let themselves
 Their wine drink noiseless ; but this mournful strain
 Break off, unfriendly to my bosom's peace,
 And which of all hearts nearest touches mine ;
 With such regret my dearest lord I mourn,
 Remembering still an husband praised from side
 To side, and in the very heart of Greece.

430

435

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
 My mother ! wherefore should it give thee pain
 If the delightful bard that theme pursue
 To which he feels his mind impell'd ? the bard
 Blame not, but rather Jove, who, as he wills,
 Materials for poetic art supplies.

440

No fault is his, if the disastrous fate
 He sing of the Achaians, for the song
 Wins ever from the hearers most applause
 That has been least in use. Of all who fought
 At Troy, Ulysses hath not lost, alone,
 His day of glad return ; but many a Chief
 Hath perish'd also. Seek thou then again
 Thy own apartment, spindle ply and loom,
 And task thy maidens ; management belongs
 To men of joys convivial, and of men
 Especially to me, chief ruler here.

445

450

She heard astonish'd ; and the prudent speech
 Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
 Again with her attendant maidens sought
 Her upper chamber. There arrived, she wept
 Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed

455

Her weary lids in dewy sleep profound.
Then echoed through the palace dark-bedimm'd
With evening shades, the suitors' boisterous roar, 460
For each the royal bed burn'd to partake,
Whom thus Telemachus discreet address'd.

All ye my mother's suitors, though addict
To contumacious wrangling fierce, suspend
Your clamour, for a course to me it seems 465
More decent far, when such a bard as this,
Godlike for sweetness, sings, to hear his song.
To-morrow meet we in full council all,
That I may plainly warn you to depart
From this our mansion. Seek ye where ye may 470
Your feasts; consume your own, alternate fed
Each at the other's cost; but if it seem
Wisest in your account and best, to eat
Voracious thus the patrimonial goods
Of one man, rendering⁵ no account of all, 475
Bite to the roots; but know that I will cry
Ceaseless to the eternal Gods, in hope
That Jove, for retribution of the wrong,
Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there
To bleed, and of your blood ask⁵ no account. 480

He ended, and each gnaw'd his lip, aghast
At his undaunted hardness of speech.

Then thus Antinoüs spake, Eupithes' son.
Telemachus! the Gods, methinks, themselves
Teach thee sublimity, and to pronounce 485
Thy matter fearless. Ah forbid it, Jove!
That one so eloquent should with the weight
Of kingly cares in Ithaca be charged,
A realm, by claim hereditary, thine.

Then prudent thus Telemachus replied. 490
Although my speech, Antinoüs, may, perchance,
Provoke thee, know that I am not averse
From kingly cares, if Jove appoint me such.

⁵ There is in the Original an evident stress laid on the word *Νῆπιον*, which is used in both places. It was a sort of Lex Talionis which Telemachus hoped might be put in force against them; and that Jove would demand no satisfaction for the lives of those, who made him none for the waste of his property.

Seems it to thee a burthen to be fear'd
 By men above all others? trust me, no. 495
 There is no ill in royalty; the man
 So station'd, waits not long ere he obtain
 Riches and honour. But I grant that Kings
 Of the Achaïans may no few be found
 In sea-girt Ithaca both young and old, 500
 Of whom since great Ulysses is no more,
 Reign whoso may; but King, myself, I am
 In my own house, and over all my own
 Domestics, by Ulysses gained for me.

To whom Eurymachus replied, the son
 Of Polybus. What Grecian Chief shall reign 505
 In sea-girt Ithaca, must be referr'd
 To the Gods' will, Telemachus! meantime
 Thou hast unquestionable right to keep
 Thy own, and to command in thy own house. 510
 May never that man on her shores arrive,
 While an inhabitant shall yet be left

In Ithaca, who shall by violence wrest
 Thine from thee. But permit me, noble Sir!
 To ask thee of thy guest. Whence came the man? 515
 What country claims him? Where are to be found
 His kindred and his patrimonial fields?
 Brings he glad tidings of thy Sire's approach
 Homeward? or came he to receive a debt
 Due to himself? How swift he disappear'd! 520
 Nor opportunity to know him gave
 To those who wish'd it; for his face and air
 Him speak not of Plebeian birth obscure.

Whom answer'd thus Telemachus discreet.
 Eurymachus! my father comes no more. 525
 I can no longer, now, tidings believe,
 If such arrive; nor heed I more the song
 Of sooth-sayers whom my mother may consult.
 But this my guest hath known in other days
 My father, and he came from Taphos, son 530
 Of brave Anchialus, Mentès by name,
 And Chief of the sea-practised Taphian race.

So spake Telemachus, but in his heart
 Knew well his guest a Goddess from the skies.

Then they to dance and heart-enlivening song
Turn'd joyous, waiting the approach of eve,
And dusky evening found them joyous still.
Then each, to his own house retiring, sought
Needful repose. Meantime Telemachus
To his own lofty chamber, built in view
Of the wide hall, retired ; but with a heart
In various musings occupied intense.
Sage Euryclea, bearing in each hand
A torch, preceded him ; her sire was Ops,
Pisenor's son, and in her early prime,
At his own cost Laertes made her his,
Paying with twenty beeves her purchase-price.
Nor in less honour than his spotless wife
He held her ever, but his consort's wrath
Fearing, at no time call'd her to his bed.
She bore the torches, and with truer heart
Loved him than any of the female train,
For she had nursed him in his infant years.
He opened his broad chamber-valves, and sat
On his couch-side ; then, putting off his vest
Of softest texture, placed it in the hands
Of the attendant dame, discreet, who first
Folding it with exactest care, beside
His bed suspended it, and going forth,
Drew by its silver ring the portal close,
And fasten'd it with bolt and brace secure.
There lay Telemachus, on finest wool
Reposed, contemplating all night his course
Prescribed by Pallas to the Pylian shore.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus having convened an assembly of the Grecians, publicly calls on the Suitors to relinquish the house of Ulysses. During the continuance of the Council he has much to suffer from the petulance of the Suitors, from whom, having informed them of his design to undertake a voyage in hope to obtain news of Ulysses, he asks a ship, with all things necessary for the purpose. He is refused, but is afterwards furnished with what he wants by Minerva, in the form of Mentor. He embarks in the evening without the privity of his mother, and the Goddess sails with him.

AURORA, rosy daughter of the dawn,
 Now tinged the East, when, habited again,
 Uprose Ulysses' offspring from his bed.
 Athwart his back his faulchion keen he slung,
 His sandals bound to his unsullied feet, 5
 And, Godlike, issued from his chamber-door.
 At once the clear-voiced heralds he enjoin'd
 To call the Greeks to council ; they aloud
 Gave forth the summons, and the throng began.
 When all were gather'd, and the assembly full, 10
 Himself, his hand armed with a brazen spear,
 Went also ; nor alone he went ; his hounds
 Fleet-footed follow'd him a faithful pair.
 O'er all his form Minerva largely shed
 Majestic grace divine, and, as he went, 15
 The whole admiring concourse gazed on him.
 The seniors gave him place, and down he sat
 On his paternal Throne. Then grave arose
 The Hero, old Ægyptius ; bow'd with age
 Was he, and by experience deep-inform'd. 20
 His son had with Ulysses, godlike Chief,
 On board his fleet to steed-famed Ilium gone,
 The warrior Antiphus, whom in his cave
 The savage Cyclops slew, and on his flesh
 At evening made obscene his last regale. 25
 Three sons he had beside, a suitor one,

Eurynomus ; the other two, employ
 Found constant managing their Sire's concerns.
 Yet he forgot not, father as he was
 Of these, his absent eldest whom he mourn'd 30
 Ceaseless, and thus his speech, weeping, began.

Hear me, ye men of Ithaca, my friends !
 Nor council here nor session hath been held
 Since great Ulysses left his native shore.
 Who now convenes us ? what especial need 35
 Hath urged him, whether of our youth he be,
 Or of our senators by age matured ?
 Have tidings reach'd him of our host's return,
 Which here he would divulge ? or brings he aught
 Of public import on a different theme ? 40
 I deem him, whomsoe'er he be, a man
 Worthy to prosper, and may Jove vouchsafe
 The full performance of his chief desire !

He ended, and Telemachus rejoiced
 In that good omen. Ardent to begin, 45
 He sat not long, but moving to the midst,
 Received the sceptre from Pisenor's hand,
 His prudent herald, and addressing, next,
 The hoary Chief Ægyptius, thus began.

Not far remote, as thou shalt soon thyself 50
 Perceive, oh venerable Chief ! he stands,
 Who hath convened this council. I, am He.
 I am in chief the sufferer. Tidings none
 Of the returning host I have received,
 Which here I would divulge, nor bring I aught 55
 Of public import on a different theme,
 But my own trouble, on my own house fallen,
 And two-fold fallen. One is, that I have lost
 A noble father, who, as fathers rule
 Benign their children, govern'd once yourselves ; 60
 The other, and the more alarming ill,
 With ruin threatens my whole house, and all
 My patrimony with immediate waste.

Suitors, (their children who in this our isle
 Hold highest rank,) importunate besiege 65
 My mother, though desirous not to wed ;
 And rather than resort to her own Sire

Icarius, who might give his daughter dower,
 And portion her to whom he most approves,
 (A course which, only named, moves their disgust,) 70
 They choose, assembling all within my gates
 Daily to make my beeves, my sheep, my goats
 Their banquet, and to drink without restraint
 My wine; whence ruin threatens us and ours;
 For I have no Ulysses to relieve 75
 Me and my family from this abuse.
 Ourselves are not sufficient; we, alas!
 Too feeble should be found, and yet to learn
 How best to use the little force we own;
 Else, had I power, I would, myself, redress 80
 The evil; for it now surpasses far
 All sufferance, now they ravage uncontrol'd,
 Nor show of decency vouchsafe me more.
 Oh be¹ ashamed yourselves; blush at the thought
 Of such reproach as ye shall sure incur 85
 From all our neighbour states, and fear beside
 The wrath of the Immortals, lest they call
 Yourselves one day to a severe account.
 I pray you by Olympian Jove, by her
 Whose voice convenes all councils, and again 90
 Dissolves them, Themis, that henceforth ye cease,
 That ye permit me, oh my friends! to wear
 My days in solitary grief away,
 Unless Ulysses, my illustrious Sire,
 Hath in his anger any Grecian wrong'd 95
 Whose wrongs ye purpose to avenge on me,
 Inciting these to plague me. Better far
 Were my condition, if yourselves consumed
 My substance and my revenue; from you
 I might obtain, perchance, righteous amends 100
 Hereafter; you I might with vehement suit
 O'ercome, from house to house pleading aloud
 For recompense, till I at last prevail'd;
 But now, with darts of anguish ye transfix
 My inmost soul, and I have no redress. 105

¹ The reader is to be reminded that this is not an assembly of the suitors only, but a general one, which affords Telemachus an opportunity to apply himself to the feelings of the Ithacans at large.

He spake impassion'd, and to earth cast down
His sceptre, weeping. Pity at the sight
Seized all the people ; mute the assembly sat
Long time, none dared to greet Telemachus
With answer rough, till of them all, at last, 110
Antinoüs, sole arising, thus replied.

Telemachus, intemperate in harangue,
High-sounding orator ! it is thy drift
To make us all odious ; but the offence
Lies not with us the suitors ; she alone 115
Thy mother, who in subtlety excels,
And deep-wrought subterfuge, deserves the blame.
It is already the third year, and soon

Shall be the fourth, since with delusive art
Practising on their minds, she hath deceived 120
The Grecians ; message after message sent
Brings hope to each, by turns, and promise fair,
But she, meantime, far otherwise intends.

Her other arts exhausted all, she framed
This stratagem ; a web of amplest size 125
And subtlest woof beginning, thus she spake.

Princes, my suitors ! since the noble Chief
Ulysses is no more, press not as yet
My nuptials ; wait till I shall finish, first,
A funeral robe (lest all my threads decay) 130
Which for the ancient Hero I prepare,
Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest ;

Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,
Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud. 135

So spake the Queen, and unsuspecting, we
With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day
She wove the ample web, and by the aid
Of torches ravell'd it again at night.

Three years by such contrivance she deceived 140
The Grecians ; but when (three whole years elapsed)

The fourth arrived, then conscious of the fraud,
A damsel of her train told all the truth,
And her we found ravelling the beauteous work.
Thus, through necessity she hath, at length, 145
Perform'd the task, and in her own despite.

Now therefore, for the information clear
 Of thee thyself, and of the other Greeks,
 We answer. Send thy mother hence, with charge
 That him she wed, on whom her father's choice 150
 Shall fall, and whom she shall herself approve.
 But if by long procrastination still
 She persevere, wearing our patience out,
 Attentive only to display the gifts
 By Pallas so profusely dealt to her, 155
 Works of surpassing skill, ingenious thought,
 And subtle shifts, such as no beauteous Greek
 (For aught that we have heard) in ancient times
 E'er practised, Tyro, or Alcmena fair,
 Or fair Mycene, of whom none in art 160
 E'er match'd Penelope, although we yield.
 To this her last invention little praise,
 Then know, that these her suitors will consume
 So long thy patrimony and thy goods,
 As she her present purpose shall indulge, 165
 With which the Gods inspire her. Great renown
 She to herself insures, but equal woe
 And devastation of thy wealth to thee ;
 For neither to our proper works at home
 Go we, of that be sure, nor yet elsewhere, 170
 Till him she wed, to whom she most inclines.
 Him prudent, then, answer'd Telemachus.
 Antinoüs ! it is not possible
 That I should thrust her forth against her will,
 Who both produced and rear'd me. Be he dead, 175
 Or still alive, my Sire is far remote ;
 And should I, voluntary, hence dismiss
 My mother to Icarus, I must much
 Refund, which hardship were and loss to me.
 So doing, I should also wrath incur 180
 From my offended Sire, and from the Gods
 Still more ; for she, departing, would invoke
 Erynnis to avenge her, and reproach
 Beside would follow me from all mankind.
 That word I, therefore, never will pronounce, 185
 No ; if ye judge your treatment at her hands
 Injurious to you, go ye forth yourselves,

Your feasts ; consume your own ; alternate feed
Each at the other's cost. But if it seem 190
Wisest in your account and best to eat
Voracious thus the patrimonial goods
Of one man, rendering no account of all,
Bite to the roots ; but know that I will cry
Ceaseless to the eternal Gods in hope 195
That Jove in retribution of the wrong,
Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there
To bleed, and of your blood ask no account.

So spake Telemachus, and while he spake,
The Thunderer from a lofty mountain-top 200
Turn'd off two eagles ; on the winds, awhile,
With outspread pinions ample side by side
They floated ; but, ere long, hovering aloft,
Right o'er the midst of the assembled Chiefs
They wheel'd around, clang'd all their numerous plumes, 205
And with a downward look eyeing the throng,
Death boded, ominous ; then rending each
The other's face and neck, they sprang at once
Toward the right, and darted through the town.
Amazement universal, at that sight, 210
Seized the assembly, and with anxious thought
Each scann'd the future ; amidst whom arose
The Hero Halitherses, ancient Seer,
Offspring of Mastor ; for in judgment he
Of portents augural, and in forecast 215
Unerring, his coevals all excell'd,
And prudent thus the multitude bespake.

Ye men of Ithaca, give ear ! hear all !
Though chief my speech shall to the suitors look.
For, on their heads devolved, comes down the woe. 220
Ulysses shall not from his friends, henceforth,
Live absent long, but, hasting to his home,
Comes even now, and as he comes, designs
A bloody death for these, whose bitter woes
No few shall share, inhabitants with us 225
Of pleasant Ithaca ; but let us frame
Effectual means maturely to suppress
Their violent deeds, or rather let themselves
Repentant cease ; and soonest shall be best.

Not inexpert, but well-inform'd I speak 230
The future, and the accomplishment announce
Of all which when Ulysses with the Greeks
Embark'd for Troy, I to himself foretold.

I said that, after many woes, and loss
Of all his people, in the twentieth year, 235
Unknown to all, he should regain his home,
And my prediction shall be now fulfill'd.

Him, then, Eurymachus thus answer'd rough
The son of Polybus. Hence to thy house,
Thou hoary dotard! there, prophetic, teach 240
Thy children to escape woes else to come.

Birds numerous flutter in the beams of day,
Not all predictive. Death, far hence remote
Hath found Ulysses, and I would to heaven
That, where he died, thyself had perish'd too : 245

Thou hadst not then run o'er with prophecy
As now, nor provocation to the wrath
Given of Telemachus, in hope to win,
Perchance, for thine some favour at his hands.

But I to *thee* foretell, skill'd as thou art 250
In legends old, (nor shall my threat be vain,)
That if by artifice thou move to wrath

A younger than thyself, no matter whom,
Woe first the heavier on himself shall fall,
Nor shalt thou profit him by thy attempt ; 255
And we will charge thee also with a mulct,
Which thou shalt pay with difficulty, and bear
The burthen of it with an aching heart.

As for Telemachus, I him advise,
Myself, and press the measure on his choice 260
Earnestly, that he send his mother hence
To her own father's house, who shall, himself,
Set forth her nuptial rights, and shall endow
His daughter sumptuously, and as he ought.

For this expensive wooing, as I judge, 265
Till then shall never cease ; since we regard
No man—no—not Telemachus, although
In words exuberant ; neither fear we aught
Thy vain prognostics, venerable sir !

But only hate thee for their sake the more. 270

Waste will continue and disorder foul
Unremedied, so long as she shall hold
The suitors in suspense, for, day by day,
Our emulation goads us to the strife,
Nor shall we, going hence, seek to espouse
Each his own consort suitable elsewhere. 275

To whom, discreet, Telemachus replied.
Eurymachus, and ye the suitor train
Illustrious, I have spoken; ye shall hear
No more this supplication urged by me. 280
The Gods, and all the Greeks, now know the truth.
But give me instantly a gallant bark
With twenty rowers, skill'd their course to win
To whatsoever haven; for I go
To sandy Pylus, and shall hasten thence 285
To Lacedemon, tidings to obtain
Of my long-absent Sire, or from the lips
Of man, or by a word from Jove vouchsafed
Himself, best source of notice to mankind.
If, there inform'd that still my father lives, 290
I hope conceive of his return, although
Distress'd, I shall be patient yet a year.
But should I learn, haply, that he survives
No longer, then, returning, I will raise
At home his tomb, will with such pomp perform 295
His funeral rites, as his great name demands,
And give my mother's hand to whom I may.

This said, he sat, and after him arose
Mentor, illustrious Ulysses' friend,
To whom, embarking thence, he had consign'd 300
All his concerns, that the old Chief might rule
His family, and keep the whole secure.
Arising, thus the senior, sage, began.

Hear me, ye Ithacans! be never King
Henceforth, benevolent, gracious, humane 305
Or righteous, but let every sceptred hand
Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
Since none of all his people, whom he sway'd
With such paternal gentleness and love,
Remembers the divine Ulysses more! 310
That the imperious suitors thus should weave

The web of mischief and atrocious wrong,
 I grudge not ; since at hazard of their heads
 They make Ulysses' property a prey,
 Persuaded that the Hero comes no more. 315
 But much the people move me ; how ye sit
 All mute, and though a multitude, yourselves,
 Opposed to few, risk not a single word
 To check the licence of these bold intruders !

Then thus Liocritus, Evenor's son. 320
 Injurious Mentor ! headlong orator !
 How darest thou move the populace against
 The suitors ? Trust me they should find it hard,
 Numerous as they are, to cope with us,
 A feast the prize. Or should the King himself 325
 Of Ithaca, returning, undertake
 To expel the jovial suitors from his house,
 Much as Penelope his absence mourns,
 His presence should afford her little joy ;
 For fighting sole with many, he should meet 330
 A dreadful death. Thou, therefore, speak'st amiss.

As for Telemachus, let Mentor him
 And Halytherses furnish forth, the friends
 Long valued of his Sire, with all dispatch ;
 Though him I judge far likelier to remain 335
 Long time contented an enquirer here,
 Than to perform the voyage now proposed.

Thus saying, Liocritus dissolved in haste
 The council, and the scatter'd concourse sought
 Their several homes, while all the suitors flock'd 340
 Thence to the palace of their absent King.
 Meantime, Telemachus from all resort
 Retiring, in the surf of the grey Deep
 First laved his hands, then, thus to Pallas pray'd.

O Goddess ! who wast yesterday a guest 345
 Beneath my roof, and didst enjoin me then
 A voyage o'er the sable Deep in quest
 Of tidings of my long-regretted Sire !
 Which voyage, all in Ithaca, but most
 The haughty suitors, obstinate impede, 350
 Now hear my suit and gracious interpose !

Such prayer he made ; then Pallas, in the form,

And with the voice of Mentor, drawing nigh,
In accents wing'd, him kindly thus bespake.

Telemachus ! thou shalt hereafter prove 355
Nor base, nor poor in talents. If, in truth,
Thou have received from heaven thy father's force
Instill'd into thee, and resemblest him

In promptness both of action and of speech,
Thy voyage shall not useless be, or vain. 360

But if Penelope produced thee not
His son, I, then, hope not for good effect
Of this design which, ardent, thou pursuest.
Few sons their fathers equal ; most appear
Degenerate ; but we find, though rare, sometimes 365
A son superior even to his Sire.

And since thyself shalt neither base be found
Nor spiritless, nor altogether void
Of talents, such as grace thy royal Sire,
I therefore hope success of thy attempt. 370

Heed not the suitors' projects ; neither wise
Are they, nor just, nor aught suspect the doom
Which now approaches them, and in one day
Shall overwhelm them all. No long suspense
Shall hold thy purposed enterprize in doubt, 375

Such help from me, of old thy father's friend,
Thou shalt receive, who with a bark well-oar'd
Will serve thee, and myself attend thee forth.

But haste, join thou the suitors, and provide,
In separate vessels stow'd, all needful stores, 380
Wine in thy jars, and flour, the strength of man,
In skins close-seam'd. I will, meantime, select
Such as shall voluntary share thy toils.

In sea-girt Ithaca, new ships and old
Abound, and I will choose, myself, for thee 385
The prime of all, which without more delay
We will launch out into the spacious Deep.

Thus Pallas spake, daughter of Jove ; nor long,
So greeted by the voice divine, remain'd
Telemachus, but to his palace went 390
Distress'd in heart. He found the suitors there
Goats flaying in the hall, and fatted swine
Roasting ; when with a laugh Antinous flew

To meet him, fasten'd on his hand, and said.

Telemachus, in eloquence sublime, 395

And of a spirit not to be control'd!

Give harbour in thy breast on no account

To after-grudge or enmity, but eat,

Far rather, cheerfully as heretofore,

And freely drink, committing all thy cares 400

To the Achaians, who shall furnish forth

A gallant ship and chosen crew for thee,

That thou may'st hence to Pilus with all speed,

Tidings to learn of thy illustrious Sire.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied. 405

Antinoüs, I have no heart to feast

With guests so insolent, nor can indulge

The pleasures of a mind at ease, with you.

Is 't not enough, suitors, that ye have used

My noble patrimony as your own 410

While I was yet a child? now, grown mature,

And competent to understand the speech

Of my instructors, feeling, too, a mind

Within me conscious of augmented powers,

I will attempt your ruin, be assured, 415

Whether at Pylus, or continuing here.

I go, indeed, (nor shall my voyage prove

Of which I speak, bootless or vain,) I go

An humble passenger, who neither bark

Nor rowers have to boast my own, denied 420

That honour (so ye judged it best) by you.

He said, and from Antinoüs' hand his own

Drew sudden. Then their delicate repast

The busy suitors on all sides prepared,

Still taunting as they toil'd, and with sharp speech 425

Sarcastic wantoning, of whom a youth,

Arrogant as his fellows, thus began.

I see it plain, Telemachus intends

Our slaughter; either he will aids procure

From sandy Pylus, or will bring them arm'd 430

From Sparta; such is his tremendous drift.

Even to fruitful Ephyre, perchance,

He will proceed, seeking some baneful herb

Which cast into our cup, shall drug us all.

To whom some haughty suitor thus replied. 435
Who knows but that himself, wandering the sea
From all his friends and kindred far remote,
May perish like Ulysses ? Whence to us
Should double toil ensue, on whom the charge
To parcel out his wealth would then devolve, 440
And to endow his mother with the house
For his abode whom she should chance to wed.

So sported they ; but he, ascending, sought
His father's lofty chamber, where his heaps
He kept of brass and gold, garments in chests, 445
And oils of fragrant scent, a copious store.
There many a cask with season'd nectar fill'd
The grape's pure juice divine, beside the wall
Stood orderly arranged, waiting the hour
(Should e'er such hour arrive) when, after woes 450
Numerous, Ulysses should regain his home.
Secure that chamber was with folding doors
Of massy planks compact, and, night and day,
Within it ancient Euryclea dwelt,
Guardian discreet of all the treasures there, 455
Whom, thither call'd, Telemachus address'd.

Nurse ! draw me forth sweet wine into my jars,
Delicious next to that which thou reservest
For our poor wanderer ; if escaping death
At last, divine Ulysses e'er return. 460
Fill twelve, and stop them close ; pour also meal
Well-mill'd (full twenty measures) into skins
Close-seam'd, and mention what thou dost to none.
Place them together ; for at even-tide
I will convey them hence, soon as the Queen, 465
Retiring to her couch, shall seek repose.
For hence to Sparta will I take my course,
And sandy Pylus, tidings there to hear
(If hear I may) of my loved Sire's return.
He ceased ; then wept his gentle nurse that sound 470
Hearing, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

My child ! ah, wherefore hath a thought so rash
Possess'd thee ? whither, only and beloved,
Seek'st thou to ramble, travelling, alas !
To distant climes ? Ulysses is no more ; 475

Dead lies the hero in some land unknown,
And thou no sooner shalt depart, than these
Will plot to slay thee, and divide thy wealth.
No, stay with us who love thee. Need is none
That thou should'st on the barren Deep distress 480
Encounter, roaming without hope or end.

Whom, prudent, thus answer'd Telemachus.
Take courage, nurse! for not without consent
Of the Immortals I have thus resolved.
But swear, that till eleven days be past, 485
Or twelve, or till enquiry made, she learn
Herself my going, thou wilt nought impart
Of this my purpose to my mother's ear,
Lest all her beauties fade by grief impair'd.

He ended, and the ancient matron swore 490
Solemnly by the Gods; which done, she fill'd
With wine the vessels and the skins with meal,
And he, returning, join'd the throng below.

Then Pallas, Goddess azure-eyed, her thoughts
Elsewhere directing, all the city ranged 495
In semblance of Telemachus, each man
Exhorting, at the dusk of eve, to seek
The gallant ship, and from Noëmon, son
Renown'd of Phronius, ask'd, herself, a bark,
Which soon as ask'd, he promised to supply. 500

Now set the sun, and twilight dimm'd the ways,
When, drawing down his bark into the Deep,
He gave her all her furniture, oars, arms
And tackle, such as well-built galleys bear,
Then moor'd her in the bottom of the bay. 505
Meantime, his mariners in haste repair'd
Down to the shore, for Pallas urged them on.
And now, on other purposes intent,
The Goddess sought the palace, where with dews
Of slumber drenching every suitor's eye, 510
She fool'd the drunkard multitude, and dash'd
The goblets from their idle hands away.
They through the city reel'd, happy to leave
The dull carousal, when the slumberous weight
Oppressive on their eyelids once had fallen. 515
Next, Pallas azure-eyed in Mentor's form

And with the voice of Mentor, summoning
Telemachus abroad, him thus bespake.

Telemachus ! already at their oars
Sit all thy fellow-voyagers, and wait 520
Thy coming ; linger not, but haste away.

This said, Minerva led him thence, whom he
With nimble steps follow'd, and, on the shore
Arrived, found all his mariners prepared,
Whom thus the princely voyager address'd. 525

Haste, my companions ! bring we down the stores
Already sorted, and set forth ; but nought
My mother knows, or any of her train
Of this design, one matron sole except.

He spake, and led them ; they obedient, brought 530
All down, and, as Ulysses' son enjoin'd,
Within the gallant bark the charge bestow'd.

Then, led by Pallas, went the prince on board,
Where down they sat, the Goddess in the stern,
And at her side Telemachus. The crew 535

Cast loose the hawsers, and embarking, fill'd
The benches. Blue-eyed Pallas from the West
Call'd forth propitious breezes ; fresh they curl'd
The sable Deep, and, sounding, swept the waves.
He loud-exhorting them, his people bade 540

Hand, brisk, the tackle ; they, obedient, reared
The pine-tree mast, which in its socket deep
They lodged, then strain'd the cordage, and with thongs
Well-twisted, drew the shining sail aloft.

A land-breeze fill'd the canvas, and the flood 545
Roar'd as she went against the steady bark
That ran with even course her liquid way.

The rigging, thus, of all the galley set,
Their beakers crowning high with wine, they hail'd
The ever-living Gods, but above all 550

Minerva, daughter azure-eyed of Jove.
Thus, all night long the galley, and till dawn
Had brighten'd into day, cleaved swift the flood.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus arriving at Pylus, enquires of Nestor concerning Ulysses. Nestor relates to him all that he knows or has heard of the Grecians since their departure from the siege of Troy, but not being able to give him any satisfactory account of Ulysses, refers him to Menelaus. At evening Minerva quits Telemachus, but discovers herself in going. Nestor sacrifices to the Goddess, and the solemnity ended, Telemachus sets forth for Sparta in one of Nestor's chariots, and accompanied by Nestor's son Pisistratus.

THE sun, emerging from the lucid waves,
 Ascended now the brazen vault with light
 For the inhabitants of earth and heaven,
 When in their bark at Pylus they arrived,
 City of Neleus. On the shore they found 5
 The people sacrificing; bulls they slew
 Black without spot, to Neptune azure-hair'd.
 On ranges nine of seats they sat; each range
 Received five hundred, and to each they made
 Allotment equal of nine sable bulls. 10
 The feast was now begun; these eating sat
 The entrails, those stood offering to the God
 The thighs, his portion, when the Ithacans
 Push'd right ashore, and, furling close the sails,
 And making fast their moorings, disembark'd. 15
 Forth came Telemachus by Pallas led,
 Whom thus the Goddess azure-eyed address'd.
 Telemachus! there is no longer room
 For bashful fear, since thou hast cross'd the flood
 With purpose to enquire what land conceals 20
 Thy father, and what fate hath follow'd him.
 Advance at once to the equestrian Chief
 Nestor, within whose bosom lies, perhaps,
 Advice well worthy of thy search; entreat
 Himself, that he will tell thee only truth, 25
 Who will not lie, for he is passing wise.

To whom Telemachus discreet replied.
Ah Mentor ! how can I advance, how greet
A Chief like him, unpractised as I am
In managed phrase ? Shame bids the youth beware 30
How he accosts the man of many years.

But him the Goddess answer'd azure-eyed.
Telemachus ! Thou wilt, in part, thyself
Fit speech devise, and Heaven will give the rest ;
For thou wast neither born, nor hast been train'd 35
To manhood, under unpropitious Powers.

So saying, Minerva led him thence, whom he
With nimble steps attending, soon arrived
Among the multitude. There Nestor sat,
And Nestor's sons, while, busily the feast 40
Tending, his numerous followers roasted some
The viands, some transfix'd them with the spits.
They seeing guests arrived, together all
Advanced, and, grasping courteously their hands,
Invited them to sit ; but first, the son 45
Of Nestor, young Pisistratus, approach'd,
Who, fastening on the hands of both, beside
The banquet placed them, where the beach was spread
With fleeces, and where Thrasymedes sat
His brother, and the hoary Chief his Sire. 50
To each, a portion of the inner parts
He gave, then fill'd a golden cup with wine,
Which, tasted first, he to the daughter bore
Of Jove the Thunderer, and her thus bespake.

Oh guest ! the King of Ocean now adore ! 55
For ye have chanced on Neptune's festival ;
And, when thou hast, thyself, libation made
Duly and prayer, deliver to thy friend
The generous juice, that he may also make
Libation ; for he, doubtless, seeks in prayer 60
The Immortals, of whose favour all have need.
But, since he younger is, and with myself
Coeval, first I give the cup to thee.

He ceased, and to her hand consign'd the cup,
Which Pallas gladly from a youth received 65
So just and wise, who to herself had first
The golden cup presented, and in prayer

Fervent the Sovereign of the Seas adored.

Hear, earth-encircler Neptune! O vouchsafe
To us thy supplicants the desired effect
Of this our voyage; glory, first, bestow
On Nestor and his offspring both, then grant
To all the Pylians such a gracious boon
As shall requite their noble offering well.

70

Grant also to Telemachus and me
To voyage hence, possess'd of what we sought
When hither in our sable bark we came.

75

So Pallas pray'd, and her own prayer herself
Accomplish'd. To Telemachus she gave
The splendid goblet next, and in his turn
Like prayer Ulysses' son also preferr'd.
And now (the banquet from the spits withdrawn)
They next distributed sufficient share
To each, and all were sumptuously regaled.
At length (both hunger satisfied and thirst)
Thus Nestor, the Gerenian Chief, began.

80

85

Now with more seemliness we may enquire,
After repast, what guests we have received.
Our guests! who are ye? Whence have ye the waves
Plough'd hither? Come ye to transact concerns
Commercial, or at random roam the Deep
Like pirates, who with mischief charged and woe
To foreign States, oft hazard life themselves?

90

Him answer'd, bolder now, but still discreet,
Telemachus: for Pallas had his heart
With manly courage arm'd, that he might ask
From Nestor tidings of his absent Sire,
And win himself distinction and renown.

95

Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece!
Thou askest whence we are. I tell thee whence.
From Ithaca, by the umbrageous woods
Of Neritus o'erhung, by private need,
Not public, urged, we come. My errand is
To seek intelligence of the renown'd
Ulysses; of my noble father, praised
For dauntless courage, whom report proclaims
Conqueror, with thine aid, of sacred Troy.
We have already learn'd where other Chiefs

100

105

Who fought at Ilium, died ; but Jove conceals
Even the death of my illustrious Sire. 110
In dull obscurity ; for none hath heard
Or confident can answer, where he died ;
Whether he on the continent hath fallen
By hostile hands, or by the waves o'erwhelm'd
Of Amphitrite, welters in the Deep. 115
For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
That thou would'st tell me his disastrous end,
If either thou beheld'st that dread event
Thyself, or from some wanderer of the Greeks
Hast heard it ; for my father at his birth 120
Was, sure, predestined to no common woes.
Neither through pity, or o'erstrain'd respect
Flatter me, but explicit all relate
Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
E'er gratified thee by performance just 125
Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
So numerous slain in fight, oh, recollect
Now his fidelity, and tell me true.

Then Nestor thus Gerenian Hero old.
Young friend ! since thou remind'st me, speaking thus, 130
Of all the woes which indefatigable
We sons of the Achaians there sustain'd,
Both those which wandering on the Deep we bore
Wherever by Achilles led in quest
Of booty, and the many woes beside 135
Which under royal Priam's spacious walls
We suffer'd, know, that there our bravest fell.
There warlike Ajax lies, there Peleus' son ;
There, too, Patroclus, like the Gods themselves
In council ; and my son beloved there, 140
Brave, virtuous, swift of foot, and bold in fight,
Antilochus. Nor are these sorrows all ;
What tongue of mortal man could all relate ?
Should'st thou, abiding here, five years employ
Or six enquiring of the woes endured 145
By the Achaians, ere thou should'st have learn'd
The whole, thou wouldst depart, tired of the tale.
For we, nine years, stratagems of all kinds
Devised against them, and Saturnian Jove

Scarce crown'd the difficult attempt at last. 150
There no competitor in wiles well-plann'd
Ulysses found, so far were all surpass'd
In shrewd invention by thy noble Sire—
If thou indeed art his, as sure thou art,
Whose sight breeds wonders in me, and thy speech 155
His speech resembles more than might be deem'd
Within the scope of years so green as thine.
There, never in opinion, or in voice
Illustrious Ulysses and myself
Divided were, but one in heart, contrived 160
As best we might, the benefit of all.
But after Priam's lofty city sack'd,
And the departure of the Greeks on board
Their barks, and when the Gods had scatter'd them,
Then Jove imagined for the Argive host 165
A sorrowful return ; for neither just
Were all, nor prudent, therefore many found
A fate disastrous through the vengeful ire
Of Jove-born Pallas, who between the sons
Of Atreus sharp contention interposed. 170
They both, irregularly, and against
Just order, summoning by night the Greeks
To council, of whom many came with wine
Oppress'd, promulgated the cause for which
They had convened the people. Then it was 175
That Menelaus bade the general host
Their thoughts bend homeward o'er the sacred Deep,
Which Agamemnon in no sort approved.
His counsel was to stay them yet at Troy,
That so he might assuage the dreadful wrath 180
Of Pallas, first, by sacrifice and prayer.
Vain hope ! he little thought how ill should speed
That fond attempt, for, once provoked, the Gods
Are not with ease conciliated again.
Thus stood the brothers, altercation hot 185
Maintaining, till at length uprose the Greeks
With deafening clamours, and with differing minds.
We slept the night, but teeming with disgust
Mutual, for Jove great woe prepared for all.
At dawn of day we drew our gallies down 190

Into the sea, and hasty put on board
The spoils and female captives. Half the host,
With Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stay'd
Supreme commander, and embarking half
Push'd forth. Swift course we made, for Neptune smooth'd 195
The waves before us of the monstrous Deep.
At Tenedos arrived, we there perform'd
Sacrifice to the Gods, ardent to reach
Our native land, but unpropitious Jove,
Not yet designing our arrival there, 200
Involved us in dissension fierce again.
For all the crews, followers of the King,
Thy noble sire, to gratify our Chief,
The son of Atreus, chose a different course,
And steer'd their oary barks again to Troy. 205
But I, assured that evil from the Gods
Impended, gathering all my gallant fleet,
Fled thence in haste, and warlike Diomed
Exhorting his attendants, also fled.
At length, the Hero Menelaus join'd 210
Our fleets at Lesbos ; there he found us held
In deep deliberation on the length
Of way before us, whether we should steer
Above the craggy Chios to the isle
Psyria, that island holding on our left, 215
Or under Chios by the wind-swept heights
Of Mimas. Then we ask'd from Jove a sign,
And by a sign vouchsafed he bade us cut
The wide sea to Eubœa sheer athwart,
So soonest to escape the threaten'd harm. 220
Shrill sang the rising gale, and with swift prows
Cleaving the fishy flood, we reach'd by night
Geræstus, where arrived, we burn'd the thighs
Of numerous bulls to Neptune, who had safe
Conducted us through all our perilous course. 225
The fleet of Diomed in safety moor'd
On the fourth day at Argos, but myself
Held on my course to Pylus, nor the wind
One moment thwarted us, or died away,
When Jove had once commanded it to blow. 230
Thus, uninform'd, I have arrived, my son !

Nor of the Grecians, who are saved have heard,
 Or who have perish'd ; but what news soe'er
 I have obtain'd since my return, with truth
 I will relate, nor aught conceal from thee. 235

The spear-famed Myrmidons, as rumour speaks,
 By Neoptolemus, illustrious son
 Of brave Achilles led, have safe arrived ;
 Safe, Philoctetes also, son renown'd
 Of Pæas : and Idomeneus at Crete 240

Hath landed all his followers who survive
 The bloody war, the waves have swallow'd none.
 Ye have yourselves doubtless, although remote,
 Of Agamemnon heard, how he return'd,
 And how Ægisthus cruelly contriv'd 245

For him a bloody welcome, but himself
 Hath with his own life paid the murderous deed.
 Good is it therefore if a son survive
 The slain, since Agamemnon's son hath well
 Avenged his father's death, slaying, himself, 250
 Ægisthus, foul assassin-of his Sire.

Young friend ! (for pleased thy vigorous youth I view,
 And just proportion,) be thou also bold,
 That thine like his may be a deathless name.

Then, prudent, him answer'd Telemachus. 255

Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece !
 And righteous was that vengeance ; *his* renown
 Achaia's sons shall far and wide diffuse,
 To future times transmitting it in song.
 Ah ! would that such ability the Gods 260

Would grant to me, that I, as well, the deeds
 Might punish of our suitors, whose excess
 Enormous, and whose bitter taunts I feel
 Continual, object of their subtle hate.
 But not for me such happiness the Gods 265
 Have twined into my thread ; no, not for me
 Or for my father. Patience is our part.

To whom Gerenian Nestor thus replied.
 Young friend ! (since thou remind'st me of that theme)
 Fame here reports that numerous suitors haunt 270
 Thy palace for thy mother's sake, and there
 Much evil perpetrate in thy despite.

But, say, endur'st thou willing their control
 Imperious, or because the people sway'd
 By some response oracular, incline 275
 Against thee? But who knows? the time may come
 When to his home restored, either alone,
 Or aided by the force of all the Greeks,
 Ulysses may avenge the wrong; at least,
 Should Pallas azure-eyed thee love, as erst 280
 At Troy the scene of our unnumber'd woes,
 She loved Ulysses; (for I have not known
 The Gods assisting so apparently
 A mortal man, as him Minerva there;)
 Should Pallas view thee also with like love 285
 And kind solicitude, some few of those
 Should dream perchance of wedlock never more.

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
 That word's accomplishment I cannot hope;
 It promises too much; the thought alone 290
 O'erwhelms me; an event so fortunate
 Would, unexpected on my part, arrive,
 Although the Gods themselves should purpose it.

But Pallas him answer'd cœrulean-eyed.
 Telemachus! what word was that which leap'd 295
 The ivory¹ guard that should have fenced it in?
 A God, so willing, could with utmost ease
 Save any man, howe'er remote. Myself,
 I had much rather, many woes endured,
 Revisit home at last happy and safe, 300
 Than, sooner coming, die in my own house,
 As Agamemnon perish'd by the arts
 Of base Ægisthus and the subtle Queen.
 Yet not the Gods themselves can save from death
 All-levelling, the man whom most they love, 305
 When Fate ordains him once to his last sleep.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Howe'er it interest us, let us leave
 This question, Mentor! He, I am assured.

¹ Ερκος οδοντων. Prior, alluding to this expression, ludicrously renders it

“When words like these in vocal breath
 Burst from his twofold hedge of teeth.”

Returns no more, but hath already found 310
A sad, sad fate by the decree of Heaven.
But I would now interrogate again
Nestor, and on a different theme, for him
In human rights I judge and laws expert,
And in all knowledge beyond other men ; 315
For he hath govern'd, as report proclaims,
Three generations ; therefore in my eyes
He wears the awful impress of a God.
Oh Nestor, son of Neleus, tell me true ;
What was the matter of Atrides' death, 320
Wide-ruling Agamemnon ? Tell me where
Was Menelaus ? By what means contrived
Ægisthus to inflict the fatal blow,
Slaying so much a nobler than himself ?
Had not the brother of the Monarch reach'd 325
Achaian Argos yet, but, wandering still
In other climes, by his long absence gave
Ægisthus courage for that bloody deed ?
Whom answer'd the Gerenian Chief renown'd.
My son ! I will inform thee true ; meantime 330
Thy own suspicions border on the fact.
Had Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
Ægisthus found living at his return
From Ilium, never on *his* bones the Greeks
Had heap'd a tomb, but dogs and ravening fowls 335
Had torn him lying in the open field
Far from the town, nor him had woman wept
Of all in Greece, for he had foul transgress'd.
But we in many an arduous task engaged,
Lay before Ilium ; he, the while, secure 340
Within the green retreats of Argos, found
Occasion apt by flattery to delude
The spouse of Agamemnon ; she, at first,
(The royal Clytemnestra) firm refused
The deed dishonourable ; (for she bore 345
A virtuous mind, and at her side a bard
Attended ever, whom the King, to Troy
Departing, had appointed to the charge.)
But when the Gods had purposed to ensnare
Ægisthus, then dismissing far remote 350

The bard into a desert isle, he there
Abandon'd him to ravening fowls a prey,
And to his own home, willing as himself
Led Clytemnestra. Numerous thighs he burn'd
On all their hallow'd altars to the Gods, 355
And hung with tapestry, images, and gold
Their shrines, his great exploit past hope achieved.
We (Menelaus and myself) had sailed
From Troy together, but when we approach'd
Sunium, headland of the Athenian shore, 360
There Phœbus, sudden, with his gentle shafts
Slew Menelaus' pilot while he steer'd
The volant bark, Phrontis, Onetor's son,
A mariner past all expert, whom none
In steerage match'd, what time the tempest roar'd. 365
Here therefore Menelaus was detain'd,
Giving his friend due burial, and his rites
Funereal celebrating, though in haste
Still to proceed. But when, with all his fleet
The wide sea traversing, he reach'd at length 370
Malea's lofty foreland in his course,
Rough passage, then, and perilous he found.
Shrill blasts the Thunderer pour'd into his sails,
And wild waves sent him mountainous. His ships
There scatter'd, some to the Cydonian coast 375
Of Crete he push'd, near where the Jardan flows.
Beside the confines of Gortyna stands,
Amid the gloomy flood, a smooth rock, steep
Toward the sea, against whose leftward point,
Phæstus by name, the South wind rolls the surge 380
Amain, which yet the rock, though small, repels.
Hither with part he came, and scarce the crews
Themselves escaped, while the huge billows broke
Their ships against the rocks ; yet five he saved,
Which winds and waves drove to the Egyptian shore. 385
Thus he, provision gathering as he went
And gold abundant, roam'd to distant lands
And nations of another tongue. Meantime,
Ægisthus, these enormities at home
Devising, slew Atrides, and supreme 390
Ruled the subjected land ; seven years he reign'd

In opulent Mycenæ, but the eighth
 From Athens brought renown'd Orestes home
 For his destruction, who of life bereaved
 Ægisthus, base assassin of his Sire. 395
 Orestes, therefore, the funereal rites
 Performing to his shameless mother's shade
 And to her lustful paramour, a feast
 Gave to the Argives ; on which self-same day
 The warlike Menelaus, with his ships 400
 All treasure-laden to the brink, arrived.

And thou, young friend ! from thy forsaken home
 Rove not long time remote, thy treasures left
 At mercy of those proud, lest they divide
 And waste the whole, rendering thy voyage vain. 405
 But hence to Menelaus is the course
 To which I counsel thee ; for he hath come
 Of late from distant lands, whence to escape
 No man could hope, whom tempests first had driven
 Devious into so wide a sea, from which 410
 Themselves the birds of heaven could not arrive
 In a whole year, so vast is the expanse.
 Go, then, with ship and shipmates, or if more
 The land delight thee, steeds thou shalt not want
 Nor chariot, and my sons shall be thy guides 415
 To noble Lacedemon, the abode
 Of Menelaus ; ask from him the truth,
 Who will not lie, for he is passing wise.

While thus he spake, the sun declined and night
 Approaching, blue-eyed Pallas interposed. 420

Oh ancient King ! well hast thou spoken all.
 But now delay not. Cut² ye forth the tongues,
 And mingle wine, that (Neptune first invoked
 With due libation, and the other Gods)
 We may repair to rest ; for even now 425
 The sun is sunk, and it becomes us not
 Long to protract a banquet to the Gods
 Devote, but in fit season to depart.

² It is said to have been customary in the days of Homer, when the Greeks retired from a banquet to their beds, to cut out the tongues of the victims, and offer them to the Gods in particular who presided over conversation.

So spake Jove's daughter ; they obedient heard.
The heralds then pour'd water on their hands, 430
And the attendant youths, filling the cups,
Served them from left to right. Next all the tongues
They cast into the fire, and every guest
Arising, pour'd libation to the Gods.
Libation made, and all with wine sufficed, 435
Godlike Telemachus and Pallas both
Would have return'd incontinent on board,
But Nestor urged them still to be his guests.

Forbid it, Jove, and all the Powers of heaven !
That ye should leave me to repair on board 440
Your vessel, as I were some needy wretch
Cloakless and destitute of fleecy stores
Wherewith to spread the couch soft for myself,
Or for my guests. No. I have garments warm
An ample store, and rugs of richest dye ; 445
And never shall Ulysses' son beloved,
My friend's own son, sleep on a galley's plank
While I draw vital air ; grant also, Heaven,
That, dying, I may leave behind me sons
Glad to accommodate whatever guest ! 450

Him answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
Old Chief ! thou hast well said, and reason bids
Telemachus thy kind commands obey.
Let *him* attend thee hence, that he may sleep
Beneath thy roof, but I return on board 455
Myself to instruct my people, and to give
All needful orders ; for among them none
Is old as I, but they are youths alike,
Coevals of Telemachus, with whom
They have embark'd for friendship's sake alone. 460
I therefore will repose myself on board
This night, and to the Caucons bold in arms
Will sail to-morrow to demand arrears
Long time unpaid, and of no small amount.
But, since he has become thy guest, afford 465
My friend a chariot, and a son of thine
Who shall direct his way, nor let him want
Of all thy steeds the swiftest and the best.

So saying, the blue-eyed Goddess as upborne

On eagles' wings, vanish'd : amazement seized 470
 The whole assembly, and the ancient King
 O'erwhelm'd with wonder at that sight, the hand
 Grasp'd of Telemachus, whom he thus bespake.

My friend ! I prophecy that thou shalt prove 475
 Nor base, nor dastard, whom, so young, the Gods
 Already take in charge ; for of the Powers
 Inhabitants of Heaven, none else was this
 Than Jove's own daughter Pallas, who among
 The Grecians honour'd most thy generous Sire. ,
 But thou, O Queen ! compassionate us all, 480
 Myself, my sons, my consort ; give to each
 A glorious name, and I to thee will give
 For sacrifice an heifer of the year,
 Broad-fronted, one that never yet hath borne
 The yoke, and will incase her horns with gold. 485

So Nestor pray'd, whom Pallas gracious heard.
 Then the Gerenian warrior old, before
 His sons and sons-in-law, to his abode
 Magnificent proceeded ; they (arrived 490
 Within the splendid palace of the King)
 On thrones and couches sat in order ranged,
 Whom Nestor welcomed, charging high the cup
 With wine of richest sort, which she who kept
 That treasure, now in the eleventh year
 First broach'd, unsealing the delicious juice. 495
 With this the hoary Senior fill'd a cup,
 And to the daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd
 Pouring libation, offer'd fervent prayer.

When all had made libation, and no wish 500
 Remain'd of more, then each to rest retired,
 And Nestor the Gerenian warrior old
 Led thence Telemachus to a carved couch
 Beneath the sounding portico prepared.
 Beside him he bade sleep the spearman bold,
 Pisistratus, a gallant youth, the sole 505
 Unwedded in his house of all his sons.
 Himself in the interior palace lay,
 Where couch and covering for her ancient spouse
 The consort Queen had diligent prepared.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn, 510

Had tinged the East, arising from his bed,
Gerenian Nestor issued forth, and sat
Before his palace-gate on the white stones
Resplendent as with oil, on which of old
His father Neleus had been wont to sit, 515
In council like a God; but he had sought,
By destiny dismiss'd long since, the shades.
On those stones therefore now, Nestor himself,
Achæia's guardian, sat, sceptre in hand,
Where soon his numerous sons, leaving betimes 520
The place of their repose, also appeared,
Echephron, Stratius, Perseus, Thrasymedes,
Aretus and Pisistratus. They placed
Godlike Telemachus at Nestor's side,
And the Gerenian Hero thus began. 525

Sons, be ye quick,—execute with dispatch
My purpose, that I may propitiate first
Of all the Gods Minerva, who herself
Hath honour'd manifest our hallowed feast.
Haste, one, into the field, to order thence 530
An ox, and let the herdsman drive it home.
Another, hasting to the sable bark
Of brave Telemachus, bring hither all
His friends, save two, and let a third command
Laerceus, that he come to enwrap with gold 535
The victim's horns. Abide ye here, the rest,
And bid my female train (for I intend
A banquet,) with all diligence provide
Seats, stores of wood, and water from the rock.

He said, whom instant all obey'd. The ox 540
Came from the field, and from the gallant ship
The ship-mates of the brave Telemachus;
Next, charged with all his implements of art,
His mallet, anvil, pincers, came the smith
To give the horns their gilding; also came 545
Pallas herself to her own sacred rites.
Then Nestor, hoary warrior, furnish'd gold,
Which, hammer'd thin, the artist wrapp'd around
The victim's horns, that seeing him attired
So costly, Pallas might the more be pleased. 550
Stratius and brave Echephron introduced

The victim by his horns ; Aretus brought
 A laver, in one hand, with flowers emboss'd,
 And in his other hand a basket stored
 With cakes, while warlike Thrasymedes, arm'd 555
 With his long-hafted axe, prepared to smite
 The ox, and Perseus to receive the blood.
 The hoary Nestor consecrated first
 Both cakes and water, and with earnest prayer
 To Pallas, gave the forelock to the flames. 560
 When all had worshipp'd, and the broken cakes
 Sprinkled, then godlike Thrasymedes drew
 Close to the ox, and smote him. Deep the edge
 Enter'd, and senseless on the floor he fell.
 Then Nestor's daughters, and the consorts all 565
 Of Nestor's sons, with his own consort, chaste
 Eurydice, the daughter eldest-born
 Of Clymenus, in one shrill orison
 Vociferous join'd, while they, lifting the ox,
 Held him supported firmly, and the prince 570
 Of men, Pisistratus, his gullet pierced.
 Soon as the sable blood had ceased, and life
 Had left the victim, spreading him abroad,
 With nice address they parted at the joint ,
 His thighs, and wrapp'd them in the double caul, 575
 Which with crude slices thin they overspread.
 Nestor burn'd incense, and libation pour'd
 Large on the hissing brands, while, him beside,
 Busy with spit and prong, stood many a youth
 Train'd to the task. The thighs consumed, each took 580
 His portion of the maw, then, slashing well
 The remnant, they transpierced it with the spits
 Neatly, and held it reeking at the fire.
 Meantime the youngest of the daughters fair
 Of Nestor, beauteous Polycaste, laved, 585
 Anointed, and in vest and tunic clothed
 Telemachus, who, so refresh'd, stepp'd forth
 From the bright laver graceful as a God,
 And took his seat at ancient Nestor's side.
 The viands dress'd, and from the spits withdrawn, 590
 They sat to share the feast, and princely youths
 Arising, gave them wine in cups of gold.

When neither hunger now nor thirst remain'd
Unsated, thus Gerenian Nestor spake.

My sons, arise ! lead forth the sprightly steeds, 595
And yoke them, that Telemachus may go.

So spake the Chief, to whose command his sons,
Obedient, yoked in haste the rapid steeds,
And the intendant matron of the stores
Disposed meantime within the chariot, bread 600
And wine, with dainties, such as princes eat.
Telemachus into the chariot first

Ascended, and beside him, next, his place
Pisistratus the son of Nestor took,
Then seized the reins, and lash'd the coursers on. 605
They, nothing loth, into the open plain
Flew, leaving lofty Pylus soon afar.

Thus, journeying, they shook on either side
The yoke all day ; and now the setting sun
To dusky evening had resign'd the roads, 610
When they to Pheræ came, and the abode
Reach'd of Diocles, whose illustrious Sire
Orsilochus from Alpheus drew his birth,
And there, with kindness entertain'd, they slept.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn, 615
Look'd rosy from the East, yoking the steeds,
They in their sumptuous chariot sat again.
The son of Nestor plied the lash, and forth
Through vestibule and sounding portico
The royal coursers, not unwilling, flew. 620

A corn-invested land received them next,
And there they brought their journey to a close,
So rapidly they moved ; and now the sun
Went down, and even-tide dimm'd all the ways.

BOOK IV.

A R G U M E N T.

Telemachus, with Pisistratus, arrives at the palace of Menelaus, from whom he receives some fresh information concerning the return of the Grecians, and is in particular told, on the authority of Proteus, that his father is detained by Calypso. The suitors, plotting against the life of Telemachus, lie in wait to intercept him in his return to Ithaca. Penelope, being informed of his departure, and of their designs to slay him, becomes inconsolable, but is relieved by a dream sent to her from Minerva.

IN hollow Lacedæmon's spacious vale
 Arriving, to the house they drove direct
 Of royal Menelaus; him they found
 In his own palace, all his numerous friends
 Regaling at a nuptial banquet given 5
 Both for his daughter and the prince his son.
 His daughter to renown'd Achilles' heir
 He sent, to whom he had at Troy engaged
 To give her, and the Gods now made her his.
 With chariots and with steeds he sent her forth 10
 To the illustrious city where the prince,
 Achilles' offspring, ruled the Myrmidons.
 But to his son he gave a Spartan fair,
 Alector's daughter; from an handmaid sprang
 That son to Menelaus in his age, 15
 Brave Megapenthes; for the Gods no child
 To Helen gave, made mother, once, of her
 Who vied in perfect loveliness of form
 With golden Venus' self, Hermione.
 Thus all the neighbour princes and the friends 20
 Of noble Menelaus, feasting sat
 Within his spacious palace, among whom
 A sacred bard sang sweetly to his harp,
 While, in the midst, two dancers smote the ground
 With measured steps responsive to his song. 25
 And now the Heroes, Nestor's noble son
 And young Telemachus, arrived within

The vestibule, whom issuing from the hall,
The noble Eteoneus of the train
Of Menelaus, saw ; at once he ran 30
Across the palace to report the news
To his Lord's ear, and standing at his side,
In accents wing'd with haste thus greeted him.

Oh Menelaus ! Heaven-descended Chief !
Two guests arrive, both strangers, but the race 35
Of Jove supreme resembling each in form.
Say, shall we loose, ourselves, their rapid steeds,
Or hence dismiss them to some other host ?

But Menelaus, Hero golden-hair'd,
Indignant answer'd him. Boethe's son ! 40
Thou wast not, Eteoneus, heretofore,
A babbler, who now pratest as a child.
We have ourselves arrived indebted much
To hospitality of other men,
If Jove shall, even here, some pause at last 45
Of woe afford us. Therefore loose, at once,
Their steeds, and introduce them to the feast.

He said, and issuing, Eteoneus call'd
The brisk attendants to his aid, with whom
He loosed their foaming coursers from the yoke. 50
Them first they bound to mangers, which with oats
And mingled barley they supplied, then thrust
The chariot sidelong to the splendid wall.¹
Themselves he, next, into the royal house
Conducted, who survey'd, wondering, the abode 55
Of the heaven-favour'd King ; for on all sides
As with the splendour of the sun or moon
The lofty dome of Menelaus blazed.

Satiate, at length, with wonder at that sight,
They enter'd each a bath, and by the hands 60
Of maidens laved, and oil'd, and clothed again
With shaggy mantles and resplendent vests,
Sat both enthroned at Menelaus' side.
And now a maiden charged with golden ewer,
And with an argent laver, pouring first 65
Pure water on their hands, supplied them next,

¹ Hesychius tells us, that the Grecians ornamented with much attention the front wall of their courts for the admiration of passengers.

- With a bright table, which the maiden, chief
 In office, furnish'd plenteously with bread
 And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
 Then came the sewer, who with delicious meats 70
 Dish after dish, served them, and placed beside
 The chargers cups magnificent of gold,
 When Menelaus grasp'd their hands, and said.
 Eat and rejoice, and when ye shall have shared
 Our nuptial banquet, we will, then, enquire 75
 Who are ye both ; for, certain, not from those
 Whose generation perishes are ye,
 But rather of some race of sceptred Chiefs
 Heaven-born ; the base have never sons like you.
 So saying, he from the board lifted his own 80
 Distinguish'd portion, and the fatted chine
 Gave to his guests ; the savoury viands they
 With outstretch'd hands assail'd, and when the force
 No longer now of appetite they felt,
 Telemachus, inclining close his head 85
 To Nestor's son, lest others should his speech
 Witness, in whisper'd words him thus address'd.
 Dearest Pisistratus, observe, my friend !
 How all the echoing palace with the light
 Of beaming brass, of gold and amber shines 90
 Silver and ivory ! for radiance such
 The interior mansion of Olympian Jove
 I deem. What wealth, how various, how immense
 Is here ! astonish'd I survey the sight !
 But Menelaus, golden-hair'd, his speech 95
 O'erhearing, thus in accents wing'd replied.
 My children ! let no mortal man pretend
 Comparison with Jove ; for Jove's abode
 And all his stores are incorruptible.
 But whether mortal man with me may vie 100
 In the display of wealth, or whether not,
 This know, that after many toils endured,
 And perilous wanderings wide, in the eighth year
 I brought my treasures home. Remote I roved
 To Cyprus, to Phoenice, to the shores 105
 Of Egypt ; Æthiopia's land I reach'd,
 Th' Erembi, the Sidonians, and the coasts

Of Libya, where the lambs their foreheads show
At once with horns defended, soon as yeon'd.
There, thrice within the year the flocks produce, 110
Nor master, there, nor shepherd ever feels
A dearth of cheese, of flesh, or of sweet milk
Delicious, drawn from udders never dry.
While, thus, commodities on various coasts
Gathering I roam'd, another, by the arts 115
Of his pernicious spouse aided, of life
Bereaved my brother privily, and when least
He fear'd to lose it. Therefore little joy
To me results from all that I possess.
Your fathers (be those fathers who they may,) 120
These things have doubtless told you ; for immense
Have been my sufferings, and I have destroy'd
A palace well inhabited and stored
With precious furniture of every kind ;
Such, that I would to heaven ! I own'd at home 125
Though but the third of it, and that the Greeks
Who perish'd then, beneath the walls of Troy
Far from steed-pastured Argos, still survived.
Yet while, sequester'd here, I frequent mourn
My slaughter'd friends, by turns I soothe my soul 130
With tears shed for them, and by turns again
I cease ; for grief soon satiates free indulged.
But of them all, although I all bewail,
None mourn I so as one, whom calling back
To memory, I both sleep and food abhor. 135
For, of Achaia's sons none ever toil'd
Strenuous as Ulysses ; but his lot
Was woe, and unremitting sorrow mine
For his long absence, who, if still he live,
We know not aught, or be already dead. 140
Him doubtless, old Laertes mourns, and him
Discreet Penelope, nor less his son
Telemachus, born newly when he sail'd.
So saying, he kindled in him strong desire
To mourn his father ; at his father's name 145
Fast fell his tears to ground, and with both hands
He spread his purple cloak before his eyes ;
Which Menelaus marking, doubtful sat

If he should leave him leisure for his tears,
Or question him, and tell him all at large. 150

While thus he doubted, Helen (as it chanced)
Leaving her fragrant chamber, came, august
As Dian, goddess of the golden bow.
Adrasta, for her use, set forth a throne,
Alcippe with soft arras cover'd it, 155
And Philo brought her silver basket, gift
Of fair Alcandra, wife of Polybus,
Whose mansion in Egyptian Thebes is rich
In untold treasure, and who gave, himself,
Ten golden talents, and two silver baths 160
To Menelaus, with two splendid tripods,
Beside the noble gifts which, at the hand
Of his illustrious spouse, Helen received ;
A golden spindle, and a basket wheel'd,
Itself of silver, and its lip of gold. 165

That basket Philo, her own handmaid, placed
At beauteous Helen's side, charged to the brim
With slender threads, on which the spindle lay
With wool of purple lustre wrapp'd around.
Approaching, on her foot-stool'd throne she sat, 170
And, instant, of her royal spouse enquired.

Know we, my Menelaus, dear to Jove !
These guests of ours, and whence they have arrived ?
Erroneous I may speak, yet speak I must ;
In man or woman never have I seen 175
Such likeness to another, (wonder-fixt
I gaze,) as in this stranger to the son
Of brave Ulysses, whom that Hero left
New-born at home, when (shameless as I was)
For my unworthy sake the Grecians sail'd 180
To Ilium with fierce rage of battle fired.

Then Menelaus, thus, the golden-hair'd.
I also such resemblance find in him
As thou ; such feet, such hands, the cast² of eye
Similar, and the head and flowing locks. 185
And even now, when I Ulysses named,
And his great sufferings mention'd, in my cause,
The bitter tear dropp'd from his lids, while broad

² ὀφθαλμῶν τε βολαί.

Before his eyes his purple cloak he spread.

To whom the son of Nestor thus replied.

190

Atrides! Menelaus! Chief renown'd!

He is in truth his son, as thou hast said;

But he is modest, and would much himself

Condemn, if, at his first arrival here,

He should loquacious seem and bold to thee,

195

To whom we listen, captived by thy voice,

As if some God had spoken. As for me,

Nestor, my father, the Gerenian Chief

Bade me conduct him hither, for he wish'd

To see thee, promising himself from thee

200

The benefit of some kind word or deed.

For, destitute of other aid, he much

His father's tedious absence mourns at home.

So fares Telemachus; his father strays

Remote, and in his stead, no friend hath he.

205

Who might avert the mischiefs that he feels.

To whom the Hero amber-hair'd replied.

Ye Gods! the offspring of indeed a friend

Hath reach'd my house, of one who hath endured

Arduous conflicts numerous for my sake;

210

And much I purposed, had Olympian Jove

Vouchsafed us prosperous passage o'er the Deep,

To have received him with such friendship here

As none beside. In Argos I had then

Founded a city for him, and had raised

215

A palace for himself; I would have brought

The Hero hither, and his son, with all

His people, and with all his wealth, some town

Evacuating for his sake, of those

Ruled by myself, and neighbouring close my own.

220

Thus situate, we had often interchanged

Sweet converse, nor had other cause at last

Our friendship terminated or our joys,

Than death's black cloud o'ershadowing him or me.

But such delights could only envy move

225

Even in the Gods, who have, of all the Greeks,

Amerced *him* only of his wish'd return.

So saying, he kindled the desire to weep

In every bosom. Argive Helen wept

Abundant, Jove's own daughter ; wept as fast 230
 Telemachus and Menelaus both ;
 Nor Nestor's son with tearless eyes remain'd,
 Calling to mind Antilochus³ by the son⁴
 Illustrious of the bright Aurora slain,
 Remembering whom, in accents wing'd he said. 235
 Atrides ! ancient Nestor, when of late
 Conversing with him, we remember'd thee,
 Pronounc'd thee wise beyond all human-kind.
 Now therefore, let not even my advice
 Displease thee. It affords me no delight 240
 To intermingle tears with my repast,
 And soon, Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Will tinge the orient. Not that I account
 Due lamentation of a friend deceased
 Blameworthy, since, to shear the locks and weep, 245
 Is all we can for the unhappy dead.
 I also have my grief, call'd to lament
 One, not the meanest of Achaia's sons,
 My brother, him I cannot but suppose
 To thee well-known, although unknown to me 250
 Who saw him never⁵ ; but report proclaims
 Antilochus superior to the most,
 In speed superior, and in feats of arms.
 To whom, the Hero of the yellow locks.
 O friend beloved ! since nought which thou hast said 255
 Or recommended now, would have disgraced
 A man of years maturer far than thine,
 (For wise thy father is, and such art thou,
 And easy is it to discern the son
 Of such a father, whom Saturnian Jove 260
 In marriage both and at his birth ordain'd
 To great felicity ; for he hath given
 To Nestor gradually to sink at home
 Into old age, and while he lives, to see
 His sons past others wise, and skill'd in arms,) 265
 The sorrow into which we sudden fell
 Shall pause. Come—now remember we the feast ;

³ Antilochus was his brother.

⁴ The son of Aurora, who slew Antilochus, was Memnon.

⁵ Because Pisistratus was born after Antilochus had sailed to Troy.

Pour water on our hands, for we shall find
(Telemachus and I) no dearth of themes
For mutual converse when the day shall dawn. 270

He ended ; then, Asphalion, at his word,
Servant of glorious Menelaus, pour'd
Pure water on their hands, and they the feast
Before them with keen appetite assail'd.
But Jove-born Helen otherwise, meantime, 275
Employ'd, into the wine of which they drank
A drug infused, antidote to the pains
Of grief and anger, a most potent charm
For ills of every name. Whoe'er his wine
So medicated drinks, he shall not pour 280
All day the tears down his wan cheek, although
His father and his mother both were dead,
Nor even though his brother or his son
Had fallen in battle, and before his eyes.
Such drugs Jove's daughter own'd, with skill prepared, 285
And of prime virtue, by the wife of Thone,
Egyptian Polydamna, given her.

For Egypt teems with drugs, yielding no few
Which, mingled with the drink, are good, and many
Of baneful juice, and enemies to life. 290
There every man in skill medicinal
Excels, for they are sons of Pæon all.
That drug infused, she bade her servant pour
The beverage forth, and thus her speech resumed.

Atrides ! Menelaus ! dear to Jove ! 295
These also are the sons of Chiefs renown'd,
(For Jove, as pleases him, to each assigns
Or good or evil, whom all things obey,)
Now therefore, feasting at your ease reclined,
Listen with pleasure, for myself, the while, 300
Will matter seasonable interpose.

I cannot all rehearse, nor even name
(Omitting none) the conflicts and exploits
Of brave Ulysses ; but with what address
Successful, one achievement he perform'd 305
At Ilium, where Achaia's sons endured
Such hardship, will I speak. Inflicting wounds
Dishonourable on himself, he took

A tatter'd garb, and like a serving-man
Enter'd the spacious city of your foes. 310
So veil'd, some mendicant he seem'd, although
No Grecian less deserved that name than he.
In such disguise he entered; all alike
Misdeem'd him; me alone he not deceived
Who challenged him, but, shrewd, he turn'd away. 315
At length, however, when I had myself
Bathed him, anointed, cloth'd him, and had sworn
Not to declare him openly in Troy
Till he should reach again the camp and fleet,
He told me the whole purpose of the Greeks. 320
Then, (many a Trojan slaughter'd,) he regain'd
The camp, and much intelligence he bore
To the Achaians. Oh, what wailing then
Was heard of Trojan women! but my heart
Exulted, alter'd now, and wishing home; 325
For now my crime committed under force
Of Venus' influence I deplored, what time
She led me to a country far remote,
A wanderer from the matrimonial bed,
From my own child, and from my rightful Lord 330
Alike unblemish'd both in form and mind.
Her answer'd then the Hero golden-hair'd
Helen! thou hast well spoken. All is true.
I have the talents fathom'd and the minds
Of numerous Heroes, and have travell'd far, 335
Yet never saw I with these eyes in man
Such firmness as the calm Ulysses own'd;
None such as in the wooden horse he proved,
Where all our bravest sat, designing woe
And bloody havoc for the sons of Troy. 340
Thou thither camest, impell'd, as it should seem,
By some divinity inclined to give
Victory to our foes, and with thee came
Godlike Deiphobus. Thrice round about
The hollow ambush, striking with thy hand 345
Its sides thou went'st, and by his name didst call
Each prince of Greece, feigning his consort's voice.
Myself with Diomedes, and with divine
Ulysses, seated in the midst, the call

Heard plain and loud ; we (Diomedes and I)
With ardour burn'd either to quit the horse
So summon'd, or to answer from within.

350

But, all impatient as we were, Ulysses
Control'd the rash design ; so there the sons
Of the Achæians silent sat and mute,
And of us all Anticlus would alone
Have answer'd ; but Ulysses, with both hands
Compressing close his lips, saved us, nor ceased
Till Pallas thence conducted thee again.

355

Then thus, discreet, Telemachus replied.
Atrides ! Menelaus ! prince renown'd !
Hard was his lot, whom these rare qualities
Preserved not, neither had his dauntless heart
Been iron, had he 'scaped his cruel doom.
But haste, dismiss us hence, that on our beds
Reposed, we may enjoy sleep, needful now.

360

365

He ceased ; then Argive Helen gave command
To her attendant maidens to prepare
Beds in the portico with purple rugs
Resplendent, and with arras, overspread,
And cover'd warm with cloaks of shaggy pile.
Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
And spread the couches ; next, the herald them
Led forth, and in the vestibule the son
Of Nestor and the youthful hero slept,
Telemachus ; but in the interior house
Atrides, with the loveliest of her sex
Beside him, Helen of the sweeping stole.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Glow'd in the East, then from his couch arose
The warlike Menelaus, fresh attired ;
His falchion o'er his shoulders slung, he bound
His sandals fair to his unsullied feet,
And like a God issuing, at the side
Sat of Telemachus, to whom he spake.

370

375

380

385

Hero ! Telemachus ! what urgent cause
Hath hither led thee, to the land far-famed
Of Lacedæmon o'er the spacious Deep ?
Public concern or private ? Tell me true.

To whom Telemachus discreet replied.

390

Atrides ! Menelaus ! prince renown'd !
 News seeking of my Sire, I have arrived.
 My household is devour'd, my fruitful fields
 Are desolated, and my palace fill'd
 With enemies, who while they mutual wage
 Proud competition for my mother's love,
 My flocks continual slaughter, and my beeves.
 For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
 That thou wouldst tell me his disastrous end,
 If either thou beheld'st with thine own eyes
 His death, or from some wanderer of the Greeks
 Hast heard it ; for no common woes, alas !
 Was he ordain'd to share even from the womb.
 Neither through pity or o'erstrain'd respect
 Flatter me, but explicit all relate
 Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
 E'er gratified thee by performance just
 Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
 So numerous slain in fight, oh recollect
 Now his fidelity, and tell me true !

Then Menelaus, sighing deep, replied.
 Gods ! their ambition is to reach the bed
 Of a brave man, however base themselves.
 But as it chances, when the hart hath laid
 Her fawns new-yeand and sucklings yet, to rest
 Within some dreadful lion's gloomy den,
 She roams the hills, and in the grassy vales
 Feeds heedless, till the lion, to his lair
 Return'd, destroys her and her little-ones,
 So them thy Sire shall terribly destroy.
 Jove, Pallas and Apollo ! oh that such
 As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
 With Philomelides, and threw him flat,
 A sight at which Achaia's sons rejoiced,
 Such, now, Ulysses might assail them all !
 Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
 But thy enquiries neither indirect
 Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
 But all that from the Ancient⁶ of the Deep
 I have received will utter, hiding night.

⁶ Proteus.

As yet the Gods on Egypt's shore detain'd
Me wishing home, angry at my neglect
To heap their altars with slain hecatombs :
For they exacted from us evermore
Strict reverence of their laws. There is an isle 435
Amid the billowy flood, Pharos by name,
In front of Egypt, distant from her shore
Far as a vessel by a sprightly gale
Impell'd, may push her voyage in a day.
The haven there is good, and many a ship 440
Finds watering there from rivulets on the coast.
There me the Gods kept twenty days, no breeze
Propitious granting, that might sweep the waves,
And usher to her home the flying bark.
And now had our provision, all consumed, 445
Left us exhausted, but a certain nymph
Pitying saved me. Daughter fair was she
Of mighty Proteus, Ancient of the Deep,
Idothea named ; her most my sorrows moved ;
She found me from my followers all apart 450
Wandering, (for they around the isle, with hooks
The fishes snaring roam'd, by famine urged,)
And standing at my side, me thus bespake.

Stranger ! thou must be idiot born, or weak
At least in intellect, or thy delight 455
Is in distress and misery, who delay'st
To leave this island, and no egress hence
Canst find, although thy famish'd people faint.

So spake the Goddess, and I thus replied.
I tell thee, whosoever of the Powers 460
Divine thou art, that I am prison'd here
Not willingly, but must have, doubtless, sinn'd
Against the deathless tenants of the skies.
Yet say (for the Immortals all things know.)
What God detains me, and my course forbids 465
Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep ?

So I ; to whom the Goddess all divine.
Stranger ! I will inform thee true. A seer
Oracular, the Ancient of the Deep,
Immortal Proteus, the Egyptian, haunts 470
These shores, familiar with all Ocean's gulfs,

And Neptune's subject. He is by report
 My father ; him if thou art able once
 To seize and bind, he will prescribe the course
 With all its measured distances, by which 475
 Thou shalt regain secure thy native shores.
 He will, moreover, at thy suit declare,
 Thou favour'd of the skies ! what good, what ill
 Hath in thine house befallen, while absent thou
 Thy voyage difficult perform'st and long. 480

She spake, and I replied,—Thyself reveal
 By what effectual bands I may secure
 The ancient Deity marine, lest, warn'd
 Of my approach, he shun me and escape.
 Hard task for mortal hands to bind a God ! 485

Then thus Idothea answer'd all-divine.
 I will inform thee true. Soon as the sun
 Hath climb'd the middle heavens, the prophet old,
 Emerging while the breezy zephyr blows,
 And cover'd with the scum of ocean, seeks 490

His spacious cove, in which outstretch'd he lies.
 The phocæ⁷ also, rising from the waves,
 Offspring of beauteous Halosydna, sleep
 Around him, numerous, and the fishy scent
 Exhaling rank of the unfathom'd flood. 495

Thither conducting thee at peep of day
 I will dispose thee in some safe recess,
 But from among thy followers thou shalt choose
 The bravest three in all thy gallant fleet.

And now the artifices understand 500
 Of the old prophet of the sea. The sum
 Of all his phocæ numbering duly first,
 He will pass through them, and when all by fives
 He counted hath, will in the midst repose
 Content, as sleeps the shepherd with his flock. 505

When ye shall see him stretch'd, then call to mind
 That moment all your prowess, and prevent,
 Howe'er he strive impatient, his escape.
 All changes trying, he will take the form
 Of every reptile on the earth, will seem 510
 A river now, and now devouring fire ;

⁷ Seals, or sea-calves.

But hold him ye, and grasp him still the more.
And when himself shall question you, restored
To his own form in which ye found him first
Reposing, then from farther force abstain ;
Then, Hero ! loose the Ancient of the Deep,
And ask him, of the Gods who checks thy course
Hence to thy country o'er the fishy flood.

515

So saying, she plunged into the billowy waste.
I then, in various musings lost, my ships
Along the sea-beach station'd sought again,
And when I reach'd my galley on the shore
We supp'd, and sacred night falling from heaven,
Slept all extended on the ocean-side.

520

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, pensive beside the shore
I walk'd of Ocean, frequent to the Gods
Praying devout, then chose the fittest three
For bold assault, and worthiest of my trust.
Meantime the Goddess from the bosom wide
Of Ocean rising, brought us thence four skins
Of phocæ, and all newly-stript, a snare
Contriving subtle to deceive her Sire.

525

Four cradles in the sand she scoop'd, then sat
Expecting us, who in due time approach'd ;
She lodged us side by side, and over each
A raw skin cast. Horrible to ourselves
Proved that disguise, whom the pernicious scent
Of the sea-nourish'd phocæ sore annoy'd ;
For who would lay him down at a whale's side ?
But she a potent remedy devised

535

Herself to save us, who the nostrils soothed
Of each with pure ambrosia thither brought
Odorous, which the fishy scent subdued.

540

All morning, patient watchers, there we lay ;
And now the numerous phocæ from the Deep
Emerging, slept along the shore, and he
At noon came also, and perceiving there
His fatted monsters, through the flock his course
Took regular, and summ'd them ; with the first
He number'd us, suspicion none of fraud
Conceiving, then couch'd also. We, at once,

545

550

Loud-shouting flew on him, and in our arms
 Constrain'd him fast; nor the sea-prophet old
 Call'd not incontinent his shifts to mind. 555

First he became a long-maned lion grim,
 Then dragon, panther then, a savage boar,
 A limpid stream, and an o'ershadowing tree.
 We persevering held him, till at length
 The Ancient of the Deep, skill'd as he is 560
 In wiles, yet weary, question'd me, and said.

'Oh Atreus' son, by what confederate God
 Instructed liest thou in wait for me,
 To seize and hold me? what is thy desire?

So He; to whom thus answer I return'd. 565
 Old Seer! thou know'st; why, fraudulent, shouldst thou ask?
 It is because I have been prison'd long

Within this isle, whence I have sought in vain
 Deliverance, till my wonted courage fails.
 Yet say (for the Immortals all things know,) 570
 What God detains me, and my course forbids
 Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep?

So I; when thus the old one of the waves.
 *But thy plain duty was to have adored
 Jove, first, in sacrifice, and all the Gods, 575
 That then embarking, by propitious gales
 Impell'd, thou might'st have reach'd thy country soon.

For thou art doom'd ne'er to behold again
 Thy friends, thy palace, or thy native shores,
 Till thou have seen once more the hallow'd flood 580
 Of Egypt, and with hecatombs adored
 Devout the deathless tenants of the skies.

Then will they speed thee whither thou desirest.
 He ended, and my heart broke at his words,
 Which bade me pass again the gloomy gulf 585
 To Egypt; tedious course, and hard to achieve!
 Yet, though in sorrow whelm'd, I thus replied.

Old prophet! I will all thy will perform.
 But tell me, and the truth simply reveal;

⁸ From the abruptness of this beginning, Virgil, probably, who has copied the story, took the hint of his admired exordium.

*Nam quis te, juvenum confidentissime, nostras
 Egrot adire domos?*

Have the Achaians with their ships arrived 590
All safe, whom Nestor left and I, at Troy ?
Or of the Chiefs have any in their barks,
Or in their followers' arms found a dire death
Unlook'd for, since that city's siege we closed ? .

I spake, when answer thus the God return'd. 595
Atrides, why these questions ? need is none
That thou should'st all my secrets learn, which once
Reveal'd, thou wouldst not long dry-eyed remain.
Of those no few have died, and many live ;
But leaders, two alone, in their return 600
Have died, (thou also hast had war to wage,)
And one, still living, roams the boundless sea.

Ajax⁹, surrounded by his galleys, died.
Him Neptune, first, against the bulky rocks
The Gyræ drove, but saved him from the Deep ; 605
Nor had he perish'd, hated as he was

By Pallas, but for his own impious boast
In frenzy utter'd, that he would escape
The billows, even in the Gods' despite.
Neptune that speech vain-glorious hearing, grasp'd 610
His trident, and the huge Gyræan rock

Smiting indignant, dash'd it half away ;
Part stood, and part, on which the boaster sat
When, first, the brainsick fury seized him, fell,
Bearing him with it down into the gulfs 615
Of Ocean, where he drank the brine, and died.

But thy own brother in his barks escaped
That fate, by Juno saved ; yet when, at length,
He should have gain'd Malea's craggy shore,
Then, by a sudden tempest caught, he flew 620
With many a groan far o'er the fishy Deep

To the land's utmost point, where once his home
Thyestes had, but where Thyestes' son
Dwelt then, Ægisthus. Easy lay his course
And open thence, and as it pleased the Gods, 625
The shifted wind soon bore them to their home.

He high in exultation, trod the shore
That gave him birth, kiss'd it, and at the sight,
The welcome sight of Greece, shed many a tear.

⁹ Son of Oileus.

Yet not unseen he landed ; for a spy,
One whom the shrewd Ægisthus had seduced
By promise of two golden talents, mark'd
His coming from a rock where he had watch'd
The year complete, lest passing unperceived,
The King should reassert his right in arms. 630
Swift flew the spy with tidings to his Lord,
And He, incontinent, this project framed
Insidious. Twenty men, the boldest hearts
Of all the people, from the rest he chose,
Whom he in ambush placed, and others charged 635
Diligent to prepare the festal board.
With horses, then, and chariots forth he drove
Full-fraught with mischief, and conducting home
The unsuspecting King, amid the feast
Slew him, as at his crib men slay an ox. 640
Nor of thy brother's train, nor of his train
Who slew thy brother, one survived, but all,
Weltering in blood together, there expired.
He ended, and his words beat on my heart
As they would break it. On the sands I sat 645
Weeping, nor life nor light desiring more.
But when I had in dust roll'd me, and wept
To full satiety, mine ear again
The oracle of Ocean thus address'd.
Sit not, O son of Atreus ! weeping here 650
Longer, for remedy can none be found ;
But quick arising, trial make, how best
Thou shalt, and soonest, reach thy home again.
For either him still living thou shalt find,
Or ere thou come, Orestes shall have slain 655
The traitor, and thine eyes shall see his tomb.
He ceased, and I, afflicted as I was,
Yet felt my spirit at that word refresh'd,
And in wing'd accents answer thus return'd.
Of these I am inform'd ; but name the third 660
Who dead or living, on the boundless Deep
Is still detain'd ; I dread, yet wish to hear.
So I ; to whom thus Proteus in return.
Laertes' son, the Lord of Ithaca—
Him in an island weeping I beheld, 670

Guest of the nymph Calypso, by constraint
Her guest, and from his native land withheld
By sad necessity ; for ships well-oar'd,
Or faithful followers hath he none, whose aid
Might speed him safely o'er the spacious flood. 675
But, Menelaus dear to Jove ! thy fate
Ordains not thee the stroke of death to meet
In steed-famed Argos, but far hence the Gods
Will send thee to Elysium, and the earth's
Extremest bounds ; (there Rhadamanthus dwells, 680
The golden-hair'd, and there the human kind
Enjoy the easiest life ; no snow is there,
No biting winter, and no drenching shower,
But zephyr always gently from the sea
Breathes on them, to refresh the happy race ;)
For that fair Helen is by nuptial bands 685
Thy own, and thou art son-in-law of Jove.

So saying, he plunged into the billowy waste.
I then, with my brave comrades to the fleet
Return'd, deep-musing as I went, and sad. 690
No sooner had I reach'd my ship beside
The ocean, and we all had supped, than night
From heaven fell on us, and at ease reposed
Along the margin of the sea, we slept.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn, 695
Look'd rosy forth, drawing our galleys down
Into the sacred Deep, we rear'd again
The mast, unfurl'd the sail, and to our seats
On board returning, thresh'd the foamy flood.
Once more, at length, within the hallow'd stream 700
Of Egypt mooring, on the shore I slew
Whole hecatombs, and (the displeasure thus
Of the Immortal Gods appeased,) I rear'd
To Agamemnon's never-dying fame
A tomb, and finishing it sail'd again 705
With such a gale from heaven vouchsafed, as sent
My ships swift scudding to the shores of Greece.
But come—eleven days wait here or twelve
A guest with me, when I will send thee hence
Nobly and honour'd with illustrious gifts, 710
With polish'd chariot, with three princely steeds,

And with a gorgeous cup, that to the Gods
 Libation pouring ever while thou livest
 From that same cup, thou may'st remember me.

Him, prudent, then answered Telemachus.

715

Atrides seek not to detain me here
 Long time ; for though contented I could sit
 The year beside thee, nor regret my home
 Or parents (so delightful thy discourse
 Sounds in my ear,) yet, even now, I know,
 That my attendants to the Pylian shore
 Wish my return, whom thou thus long detain'st.

720

What boon soe'er thou givest me, be it such
 As I may treasured keep ; but horses none
 Take I to Ithaca ; them rather far
 Keep thou, for thy own glory. Thou art Lord
 Of an extended plain, where copious springs
 The lotus, herbage of all savours, wheat,
 Pulse, and white barley of luxuriant growth.

725

But Ithaca no level champaign owns,
 A nursery of goats, and yet a land
 Fairer than even pastures to the eye.
 No sea-encircled isle of ours affords
 Smooth course commodious, and expanse of meads,
 But my own Ithaca transcends them all !

730

735

He said ; the Hero Menelaus smiled,
 And stroking tenderly his cheek, replied.
 Dear youth ! thy speech proclaims thy noble blood.

I can with ease supply thee from within
 With what shall suit thee better, and the gift
 Of all that I possess which most excels
 In beauty, and the noblest shall be thine.

740

I give thee, wrought elaborate, a cup
 Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.

It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
 The Hero Phædimus imparted, King

745

Of the Sidonians, when on my return
 His house received me. That shall be thy own.

Thus they conferr'd ; and now the busy train
 Of ¹⁰menials culinary at the gate

750

¹⁰ Δαιτυμων—generally signifies the founder of a feast ; but we are taught by Eustathius to understand by it, in this place, the persons employed in preparing it.

Enter'd of Menelaus, Chief renown'd ;
They brought him sheep, with heart-ennobling wine,
While all their wives, their brows with frontlets bound,
Came charged with bread. Thus busy they prepared
A banquet in the mansion of the King.

755

Meantime, before Ulysses' palace gate
The suitors sported with the quoit and spear
On the smooth area, customary scene
Of all their strife and angry clamour loud.
There sat Antinoüs, and the godlike youth
Eurymachus, superior to the rest
And Chiefs among them, to whom Phronius' son
Noëmon drawing nigh, with anxious mien
Question'd Antinoüs, and thus began.

760

Know we, Antinoüs ! or know we not,
When to expect Telemachus at home
Again from Pylus ? In my ship he went,
Which now I need, that I may cross the sea
To Elis, on whose spacious plain I feed
Twelve mares, each suckling a mule-colt as yet
Unbroken, but of which I purpose one
To ferry thence, and break him into use.

765

770

He spake, whom they astonish'd heard ; for him
They deem'd not to Nelëian Pylus gone,
But haply into his own fields, his flocks
To visit, or the steward of his swine.
Then thus Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, spake.

775

Say true. When sail'd he forth ? of all our youth,
Whom chose he for his followers ? his own train
Of slaves and hirelings ? hath he power to effect
This also ? Tell me too, for I would learn—
Took he perforce thy sable bark away,
Or gavest it to him at his first demand ?

780

To whom Noëmon, Phronius' son, replied.

I gave it voluntary ; what could'st thou,
Should such a prince petition for thy bark
In such distress ? Hard were it to refuse.
Brave youths (our bravest youths except yourselves),
Attend him forth ; and with them I observed
Mentor embarking, ruler o'er them all,
Or, if not him, a God ; for such he seem'd.

785

790

But this much moves my wonder. Yester-morn
I saw, at day-break, noble Mentor here,
Whom shipp'd for Pylus I had seen before.

He ceased ; and to his father's house return'd ; 795
They, hearing, sat aghast. Their games meantime
Finish'd, the suitors on their seats reposed,
To whom Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, next,
Much troubled spake ; a black storm overcharged
His bosom, and his vivid eyes flash'd fire. 800

Ye Gods, a proud exploit is here achieved,
This voyage of Telemachus, by us
Pronounced impracticable ; yet the boy,
In downright opposition to us all,
Hath headlong launch'd a ship, and with a band 805
Selected from our bravest youth, is gone.
He soon will prove more mischievous, whose power
Jove wither, ere we suffer its effects !
But give me a swift bark with twenty rowers,
That, watching his return within the straits 810
Of rocky Samos and of Ithaca,
I may surprise him ; so shall he have sail'd
To seek his sire, fatally for himself.

He ceased, and loud applause heard in reply,
With warm encouragement. Then, rising all, 815
Into Ulysses' house at once they throng'd.
Nor was Penelope left uninform'd
Long time of their clandestine plottings deep,
For herald Medon told her all, whose ear
Their councils caught while in the outer-court 820
He stood, and they that project framed within.
Swift to Penelope the tale he bore,
Who as he pass'd the gate him thus address'd.

For what cause, herald ! have the suitors sent
Thee foremost ? Would they that my maidens lay 825
Their tasks aside, and dress the board for them ?
Here end their wooing ! may they hence depart
Never, and may the banquet now prepared,
This banquet prove your¹¹ last ! who in such throngs

¹¹ This transition from the third to the second person belongs to the original, and is considered as a fine stroke of art in the poet, who represents Penelope, in the warmth of her resentment, forgetting where she is, and addressing the suitors as if present.

Here meeting, waste the patrimony fair 830
Of brave Telemachus ; ye never, sure,
When children, heard how gracious and how good
Ulysses dwelt among your parents, none
Of all his people, or in word or deed
Injuring as great princes oft are wont, 835
By favour influenced now, now by disgust.
He no man wrong'd at any time ; but plain
Your wicked purpose in your deeds appears,
Who sense have none of benefits conferr'd.

Then Medon answer thus, prudent, return'd. 840
Oh Queen ! may the Gods grant this prove the worst.
But greater far and heavier ills than this
The suitors plan, whose counsels Jove confound !
Their base desire and purpose are to slay
Telemachus on his return ; for he, 845
To gather tidings of his Sire, is gone
To Pylus, or to Sparta's land divine.

He said ; and where she stood, her trembling knees
Fail'd under her, and all her spirits went.
Speechless she long remain'd, tears fill'd her eyes, 850
And inarticulate in its passage died
Her utterance, till at last with pain she spake.

Herald ! why went my son ? he hath no need
On board swift ships to ride, which are to man
His steeds that bear him over seas remote. 855
Went he, that, with himself, his very name
Might perish from among mankind for ever ?

Then answer, thus, Medon the wise return'd.
I know not whether him some God impell'd
Or his own heart to Pylus, there to hear 860
News of his Sire's return, or by what fate
At least he died, if he return no more.

He said, and traversing Ulysses' courts,
Departed ; she, with heart-consuming woe
O'erwhelm'd, no longer could endure to take 865
Repose on any of her numerous seats,
But on the threshold of her chamber-door
Lamenting sat, while all her female train
Around her moan'd, the ancient and the young,
Whom, sobbing, thus Penelope bespake. 870

Hear me, ye maidens! for of women born
 Coeval with me, none hath e'er received
 Such plenteous sorrow from the Gods as I,
 Who first my noble husband lost, endued
 With courage lion-like, of all the Greeks
 The Chief with every virtue most adorn'd,
 A prince all-excellent, whose glorious praise
 Through Hellas and all Argos flew diffused.
 And now, my darling son,—him storms have snatch'd
 Far hence inglorious, and I knew it not.

875

880

Ah, treacherous servants! conscious as ye were
 Of his design, not one of you the thought
 Conceived to wake me when he went on board.
 For had but the report once reach'd my ear,
 He either had not gone (how much soe'er
 He wish'd to leave me,) or had left me dead.
 But haste ye,—bid my ancient servant come,
 Dolion (whom when I left my father's house
 He gave me, and whose office is to attend
 My numerous garden-plants,) that he may seek
 At once Laertes, and may tell him all,
 Who may contrive some remedy, perchance,
 Or fit expedient, and shall come abroad
 To weep before the men who wish to slay
 Even the prince, godlike Ulysses' son.

885

890

895

Then thus the gentle Euryclea spake,
 Nurse of Telemachus. Alas! my Queen!
 Slay me, or spare, deal with me as thou wilt,
 I will confess the truth. I knew it all.
 I gave him all that he required from me,
 Both wine and bread, and at his bidding, swore
 To tell thee nought in twelve whole days to come,
 Or till, enquiry made, thou should'st thyself
 Learn his departure, lest thou should'st impair
 Thy lovely features with excess of grief.
 But lave thyself, and fresh attired, ascend
 To thy own chamber, there, with all thy train,
 To worship Pallas, who shall save, thenceforth,
 Thy son from death, what ills soe'er he meet.
 Add not fresh sorrows to the present woes
 Of the old King, for I believe not yet

900

905

910

Arcesias' race entirely by the Gods
Renounced, but trust that there shall still be found
Among them, who shall dwell in royal state,
And reap the fruits of fertile fields remote. 915

So saying, she hush'd her sorrow, and her eyes
No longer stream'd. Then, bathed and fresh attired,
Penelope ascended with her train
The upper palace, and a basket stored
With hallow'd cakes offering, to Pallas pray'd. 920

Hear, matchless daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd!
If ever wise Ulysses offer'd here
The thighs of fatted kine or sheep to thee,
Now mindful of his piety, preserve
His darling son, and frustrate with a frown 925
The cruelty of these imperious guests!

She said, and wept aloud, whose earnest suit
Pallas received. And now the spacious hall
And gloomy passages with tumult rang
And clamour of that throng, when thus a youth, 930
Insolent as his fellows, dared to speak.

Much woo'd and long, the Queen at length prepares
To choose another mate¹², and nought suspects
The bloody death to which her son is doom'd.

So he; but they, meantime, themselves remain'd 935
Untaught, what course the dread concern elsewhere
Had taken, whom Antinoüs thus address'd.

Sirs; one and all, I counsel you, beware
Of such bold boasting unadvised; lest one
O'erhearing you, report your words within. 940
No—rather thus, in silence, let us move
To an exploit so pleasant to us all.

He said, and twenty chose, the bravest there,
With whom he sought the galley on the shore,
Which drawing down into the Deep, they placed 945
The mast and sails on board, and fitting, next,
Each oar in order to its proper groove,
Unfurl'd and spread their canvas to the gale.
Their bold attendants, then, brought them their arms,
And soon as in deep water they had moor'd 950

¹² Mistaking, perhaps, the sound of her voice, and imagining that she sang.—Vide Barnes in loco.

The ship, themselves embarking, supp'd on board,
And watch'd impatient for the dusk of eve.

But when Penelope, the palace stairs
Remounting, had her upper chamber reach'd,
There, unrefresh'd with either food or wine, 955
She laid her down, her noble son the theme
Of all her thoughts, whether he should escape
His haughty foes, or perish by their hands.
Numerous as are the lion's thoughts, who sees,
Not without fear, a multitude with toils 960
Encircling him around, such numerous thoughts
Her bosom occupied, till sleep at length
Invading her, she sank in soft repose.

Then Pallas, teeming with a new design,
Set forth an airy phantom in the form 965
Of fair Iphthima, daughter of the brave
Icarius, and Eumelus' wedded wife
In Phereæ. Shaped like her the dream she sent
Into the mansion of the godlike Chief
Ulysses, with kind purpose to abate 970
The sighs and tears of sad Penelope.
Entering the chamber-portal, where the bolt
Secured it, at her head the image stood,
And thus, in terms compassionate, began.

Sleep'st thou, distress'd Penelope? The Gods, 975
Happy in everlasting rest themselves,
Forbid thy sorrows. Thou shalt yet behold
Thy son again, who hath by no offence
Incurr'd at any time the wrath of heaven.

To whom, sweet-slumbering in the shadowy gate 980
By which dreams pass, Penelope replied.

What cause, my sister, brings thee, who art seen
Unfrequent here, for that thou dwell'st remote?
And thou enjoin'st me a cessation too
From sorrows numerous, and which, fretting, wear 985
My heart continual; first, my spouse I lost,
With courage lion-like endow'd, a prince
All-excellent, whose never-dying praise
Through Hellas and all Argos flew diffused;
And now my only son, new to the toils 990
And hazards of the sea, nor less untaught

The arts of traffic, in a ship is gone
Far hence, for whose dear cause I sorrow more
Than for his Sire himself, and even shake
With terror, lest he perish by their hands
To whom he goes, or in the stormy Deep ;
For numerous are his foes, and all intent
To slay him, ere he reach his home again.

995

Then answer thus the shadowy form return'd.
Take courage ; suffer not excessive dread
To overwhelm thee, such a guide he hath
And guardian, one whom many wish their friend,
And ever at their side, knowing her power,
Minerva ; she compassionates thy griefs,
And I am here, her harbinger, who speak
As thou hast heard by her own kind command.

1000

1005

Then thus Penelope the wise replied.
Oh ! if thou art a Goddess, and hast heard
A Goddess' voice, rehearse to me the lot
Of that unhappy one, if yet he live
Spectator of the cheerful beams of day,
Or if, already dead, he dwell below.

1010

Whom answer'd thus the fleeting shadow vain.
I will not now inform thee if thy Lord
Live, or live not. Vain words are best unspoken.

1015

So saying, her egress swift beside the bolt
She made, and melted into air. Upsprang
From sleep Icarus' daughter, and her heart
Felt heal'd within her, by that dream distinct
Visited in the noiseless night serene.

1020

Meantime the suitors urged their watery way,
To instant death devoting in their hearts
Telemachus. There is a rocky isle
In the mid sea, Samos the rude between
And Ithaca, not large, named Asteris.
It hath commodious havens into which
A passage clear opens on either side,
And there the ambush'd Greeks his coming watch'd.

1025

BOOK V.

A R G U M E N T.

Mercury bears to Calypso a command from Jupiter that she dismiss Ulysses. She, after some remonstrances, promises obedience, and furnishes him with implements and materials, with which he constructs a raft. He quits Calypso's island; is persecuted by Neptune with dreadful tempests, but by the assistance of a sea nymph, after having lost his raft, is enabled to swim to Phæacia.

AURORA from beside her glorious mate
 Tithonus now arose, light to dispense
 Through earth and heaven, when the assembled Gods
 In council sat, o'er whom high-thundering Jove
 Presided, mightiest of the powers above. 5
 Amid them, Pallas on the numerous woes
 Descanted of Ulysses, whom she saw
 With grief, still prison'd in Calypso's isle.
 Jove, Father, hear me, and ye other Powers
 Who live for ever, hear! Be never King 10
 Henceforth to gracious acts inclined, humane,
 Or righteous, but let every sceptred hand
 Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
 Since none of all his people whom he sway'd
 With such paternal gentleness and love 15
 Remembers, now, divine Ulysses more.
 He in yon distant isle a sufferer lies
 Of hopeless sorrow, through constraint the guest
 Still of the nymph Calypso, without means
 Or power to reach his native shores again, 20
 Alike of gallant barks and friends deprived,
 Who might conduct him o'er the spacious Deep.
 Nor this is all, but enemies combine
 To slay his son ere yet he can return
 From Pylus, whither he hath gone to learn 25
 There, or in Sparta, tidings of his Sire.

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
What word hath pass'd thy lips, daughter beloved ?
Hast thou not purposed that arriving soon
At home, Ulysses shall destroy his foes ?
Guide thou, Telemachus, (for well thou canst,)
That he may reach secure his native coast,
And that the suitors baffled may return.

30

He ceased, and thus to Hermes spake, his son.
Hermes ! (for thou art herald of our will
At all times,) to yon bright-hair'd nymph convey
Our fixt resolve, that brave Ulysses thence
Depart, unaccompanied by God or man.

35

Borne on a corded raft, and suffering woe
Extreme, he on the twentieth day shall reach,
Not sooner, Scherie the deep-soil'd, possess'd
By the Phæacians, kinsmen of the Gods.

40

They as a God shall reverence the Chief,
And in a bark of theirs shall send him thence
To his own home, much treasure, brass and gold
And raiment giving him, to an amount
Surpassing all that, had he safe return'd,
He should by lot have shared of Ilium's spoil.
Thus fate appoints Ulysses to regain

45

His country, his own palace, and his friends.

50

He ended, nor the Argicide refused,
Messenger of the skies ; his sandals fair,
Ambrosial, golden, to his feet he bound,
Which o'er the moist wave, rapid as the wind,
Bear him, and o'er the illimitable earth,
Then took his rod with which, at will, all eyes
He closes soft, or opes them wide again.

55

So arm'd, forth flew the valiant Argicide.
Alighting on Pieria, down he stoop'd
To Ocean, and the billows lightly skimm'd

60

In form a sea-mew, such as in the bays
Tremendous of the barren Deep her food
Seeking, dips oft in brine her ample wing.
In such disguise o'er many a wave he rode,
But reaching, now, that isle remote, forsook
The azure Deep, and at the spacious grot,

65

Where dwelt the amber-tressed nymph, arrived,

Found her within. A fire on all the hearth
Blazed sprightly, and, afar-diffused, the scent
Of smooth-split cedar and of cypress wood 70
Odorous, burning, cheer'd the happy isle.
She, busied at the loom, and plying fast
Her golden shuttle, with melodious voice
Sat chaunting there ; a grove on either side,
Alder and poplar, and the redolent branch 75
Wide-spread of Cypress, skirted dark the cave.
There many a bird of broadest pinion built
Secure her nest, the owl, the kite, and daw
Long-tongued, frequenter of the sandy shores.
A garden-vine luxuriant on all sides 80
Mantled the spacious cavern, cluster-hung
Profuse ; four fountains of serenest lymph
Their sinuous course pursuing side by side,
Stray'd all around, and every where appear'd
Meadows of softest verdure, purpled o'er 85
With violets ; it was a scene to fill
A God from heaven with wonder and delight.
Hermes, Heaven's messenger, admiring stood
That sight, and having all survey'd, at length
Enter'd the grotto ; nor the lovely nymph 90
Him knew not soon as seen, for not unknown
Each to the other the Immortals are,
How far soever separate their abodes.
Yet found he not within the mighty Chief
Ulysses ; he sat weeping on the shore, 95
Forlorn, for there his custom was with groans
Of sad regret to afflict his breaking heart,
Looking continual o'er the barren Deep.
Then thus Calypso, nymph divine, the God
Question'd, from her resplendent throne august. 100
Hermes ! possessor of the potent rod !
Who, though by me much revered and beloved,
So seldom comest, say, wherefore comest now ?
Speak thy desire ; I grant it, if thou ask
Things possible, and possible to me. 105
Stay not, but entering farther, at my board
Due rites of hospitality receive.
So saying, the Goddess with ambrosial food

Her table cover'd, and with rosy juice
Nectareous charged the cup. Then ate and drank 110
The Argicide and herald of the skies,
And in his soul with that repast divine
Refresh'd, his message to the nymph declared.

Questionest thou, a Goddess, me a God ?
I tell thee truth, since such is thy demand. 115
Not willing, but by Jove constrain'd, I come.
For who would, voluntary, such a breadth
Enormous measure of the salt expanse,
Where city none is seen in which the Gods
Are served with chosen hecatombs and prayer ? 120
But no divinity may the designs
Elude, or controvert, of Jove supreme.

He saith, that here thou hold'st the most distress
Of all those warriors who nine years assail'd
The city of Priam, and, (that city sack'd,) 125
Departed in the tenth ; but, going thence,
Offended Pallas, who with adverse winds
Opposed their voyage, and with boisterous waves.
Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
Billows and storms drove hither ; Jove commands 130
That thou dismiss him hence without delay,
For fate ordains him not to perish here
From all his friends remote, but he is doom'd
To see them yet again, and to arrive
At his own palace in his native land. 135

He said ; divine Calypso at the sound
Shudder'd, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Ye are unjust, ye Gods, and envious past
All others, grudging if a Goddess take
A mortal man openly to her arms ! 140
So, when the rosy-finger'd Morning chose
Orion, though ye live yourselves at ease,
Yet ye all envied her, until the chaste
Diana from her golden throne dispatch'd
A silent shaft, which slew him in Ortygia. 145
So, when the golden-tressed Ceres, urged
By passion, took Iasion to her arms
In a thrice-labour'd fallow, not untaught
Was Jove that secret long, and hearing it,

Indignant, slew him with his candent bolt. 150
 So also, O ye Gods, ye envy me
 The mortal man, my consort. Him I saved
 Myself, while solitary on his keel
 He rode, for with his sulphurous arrow Jove
 Had cleft his bark amid the sable Deep. 155
 Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
 Billows and storms drove hither, whom I loved
 Sincere, and fondly destined to a life
 Immortal, unobnoxious to decay.
 But since no Deity may the designs 160
 Elude or controvert of Jove supreme,
 Hence with him o'er the barren Deep, if such
 The Sovereign's will, and such his stern command.
 But undimiss'd he goes by me, who ships
 Myself well-oar'd and mariners have none 165
 To send with him athwart the spacious flood ;
 Yet freely, readily, my best advice
 I will afford him, that, escaping all
 Danger, he may regain his native shore.
 Then Hermes thus, the messenger of heaven. 170
 Act as thou say'st, fearing the frown of Jove,
 Lest, if provoked, he spare not even thee.
 So saying, the dauntless Argicide withdrew,
 And she (Jove's mandate heard) all-graceful went,
 Seeking the brave Ulysses ; on the shore 175
 She found him seated ; tears succeeding tears
 Deluged his eyes, while, hopeless of return,
 Life's precious hours to eating cares he gave
 Continual, with the nymph now charm'd no more.
 Yet, cold as she was amorous, still he pass'd 180
 His nights beside her in the hollow grot,
 Constrain'd, and day by day the rocks among
 Which lined the shore heart-broken sat, and oft
 While wistfully he eyed the barren Deep,
 Wept, groan'd, desponded, sigh'd, and wept again. 185
 Then, drawing near, thus spake the nymph divine.
 Unhappy ! weep not here, nor life consume
 In anguish ; go ; thou hast my glad consent.
 Arise to labour ; hewing down the trunks
 Of lofty trees, fashion them with the axe 190

To a broad raft, which closely floor'd above,
Shall hence convey thee o'er the gloomy Deep.
Bread, water, and the red grape's cheering juice
Myself will put on board, which shall preserve
Thy life from famine ; I will also give 195
New raiment for thy limbs, and will dispatch
Winds after thee to waft thee home unharm'd,
If such the pleasure of the Gods who dwell
In yonder boundless heaven, superior far
To me, in knowledge and in skill to judge. 200

She ceased ; but horror at that sound the heart
Chill'd of Ulysses, and in accents wing'd
With wonder, thus the noble Chief replied.

Ah ! other thoughts than of my safe return
Employ thee, Goddess, now, who bid'st me pass 205
The perilous gulf of Ocean on a raft,
That wild expanse terrible, which even ships
Pass not, though form'd to cleave their way with ease,
And joyful in propitious winds from Jove.
No,—let me never, in despite of thee, 210
Embark on board a raft, nor till thou swear,
Oh Goddess ! the inviolable oath,
That future mischief thou intend'st me none.

He said ; Calypso, beauteous Goddess, smiled,
And, while she spake, stroking his cheek, replied. 215

Thou dost asperse me rudely, and excuse
Of ignorance hast none, far better taught ;
What words were these ? How could'st thou thus reply ?
Now hear me, Earth, and the wide Heaven above !
Hear, too, ye waters of the Stygian stream 220
Under the earth, (by which the blessed Gods
Swear trembling, and revere the awful oath !)
That future mischief I intend thee none.

No, my designs concerning thee are such
As, in an exigence resembling thine, 225
Myself, most sure, should for myself conceive.
I have a mind more equal, not of steel
My heart is form'd, but much to pity inclined.

So saying, the lovely Goddess with swift pace
Led on, whose footsteps he as swift pursued. 230
Within the vaulted cavern they arrived,

The Goddess and the man ; on the same throne
Ulysses sat, whence Hermes had arisen,
And viands of all kinds, such as sustain
The life of mortal man, Calypso placed 235
Before him, both for beverage and for food.
She opposite to the illustrious Chief
Reposed, by her attendant maidens served
With nectar and ambrosia. They their hands
Stretch'd forth together to the ready feast, 240
And when nor hunger more nor thirst remain'd
Unsated, thus the beauteous nymph began.

Laertes' noble son, for wisdom famed
And artifice ! oh canst thou thus resolve
To seek, incontinent, thy native shores ? 245
I pardon thee. Farewell ! but could'st thou guess
The woes which fate ordains thee to endure
Ere yet thou reach thy country, well-content
Here to inhabit, thou would'st keep my grot
And be immortal, howsoe'er thy wife 250
Engage thy every wish day after day.
Yet can I not in stature or in form
Myself suspect inferior aught to her,
Since competition cannot be between
Mere mortal beauties, and a form divine. 255

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Awful Divinity ! be not incensed.
I know that my Penelope in form
And stature altogether yields to thee,
For she is mortal, and immortal thou, 260
From age exempt ; yet not the less I wish
My home, and languish daily to return.
But should some God amid the sable Deep
Dash me again into a wreck, my soul
Shall bear *that* also ; for, by practice taught, 265
I have learn'd patience, having much endured
By tempest and in battle both. Come then
This evil also ! I am well prepared.

He ended, and the sun sinking, resign'd
The earth to darkness. Then in a recess 270
Interior of the cavern, side by side
Reposed, they took their amorous delight.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, Ulysses then in haste
Put on his vest and mantle, and the nymph 275
Her snowy vesture of transparent woof,
Graceful, redundant; to her waist she bound
Her golden zone, and veil'd her beauteous head,
Then, musing, plann'd the noble Chief's return.
She gave him, fitted to the grasp, an axe 280
Of iron, ponderous, double edged, with haft
Of olive-wood, inserted firm, and wrought
With curious art. Then, placing in his hand
A polish'd adze, she led, herself, the way
To her isle's utmost verge, where tallest trees 285
But dry long since and sapless stood, which best
Might serve his purposes, as buoyant most,
The alder, poplar, and cloud-piercing fir.
To that tall grove she led and left him there,
Seeking her grot again. Then slept not He, 290
But, swinging with both hands the axe, his task
Soon finish'd; trees full twenty to the ground
He cast, which, dexterous, with his adze he smooth'd,
The knotted surface chipping by a line.
Meantime the lovely Goddess to his aid 295
Sharp augers brought, with which he bored the beams,
Then, side by side placing them, fitted each
To other, and with long cramps join'd them all.
Broad as an artist, skill'd in naval works,
The bottom of a ship of burden spreads, 300
Such breadth Ulysses to his raft assign'd.
He deck'd her over with long planks, upborne
On massy beams; He made the mast, to which
He added suitable the yard; he framed
Rudder and helm to regulate her course, 305
With wicker-work he border'd all her length
For safety, and much ballast stow'd within.
Meantime, Calypso brought him for a sail
Fittest materials, which he also shaped,
And to his sail due furniture annex'd 310
Of cordage strong, foot-ropes and ropes aloft,
Then heaved her down with levers to the Deep.
He finish'd all his work on the fourth day,

And on the fifth, Calypso, nymph divine,
 Dismiss'd him from her isle, but laved him first, 315
 And cloth'd him in sweet-scented garments new.
 Two skins the Goddess also placed on board,
 One charged with crimson wine, and ampler one
 With water, nor a bag with food replete
 Forgot, nutritious, grateful to the taste, 320
 Nor yet, her latest gift, a gentle gale
 And manageable, which Ulysses spread,
 Exulting, all his canvas to receive.
 Beside the helm he sat, steering expert,
 Nor sleep fell ever on his eyes that watch'd 325
 Intent the Pleiads, tardy in decline
 Bootes, and the Bear, call'd else the Wain,
 Which, in his polar prison circling, looks
 Direct toward Orion, and alone
 Of these sinks never to the briny Deep. 330
 That star the lovely Goddess bade him hold
 Continual on his left through all his course.
 Ten days and seven, he, navigating, cleaved
 The brine, and on the eighteenth day, at length,
 The shadowy mountains of Phæacia's land 335
 Descried, where nearest to his course it lay
 Like a broad buckler on the waves afloat.
 But Neptune, now returning from the land
 Of Ethiopia, mark'd him on his raft
 Skimming the billows, from the mountain-tops 340
 Of distant Solyma.¹ With tenfold wrath
 Inflamed that sight he view'd, his brows he shook,
 And thus within himself, indignant, spake.
 So then—new counsels in the skies, it seems,
 Propitious to Ulysses, have prevail'd 345
 Since Ethiopia hath been my abode.
 He sees Phæacia nigh, where he must leap
 The boundary of his woes ; but ere that hour
 Arrive, I will ensure him many a groan.
 So saying, he grasp'd his trident, gather'd dense 350
 The clouds and troubled ocean ; every storm
 From every point he summon'd, earth and sea
 Darkening, and the night fell black from heaven.

¹ The Solymi were the ancient inhabitants of Pisidia in Asia Minor.

The East, the South, the heavy-blowing West,
And the cold North-wind clear, assail'd at once 355
His raft, and heaved on high the billowy flood.
All hope, all courage, in that moment lost,
The Hero thus within himself complain'd.

Wretch that I am, what destiny at last
Attends me ! much I fear the Goddess' words 360
All true, which threaten'd me with numerous ills
On the wide sea, ere I should reach my home.
Behold them all fulfill'd ! With what a storm
Jove hangs the heavens, and agitates the Deep !
The winds combined beat on me. Now I sink ! 365
Thrice blest, and more than thrice, Achaia's sons
At Ilium slain for the Atridæ' sake !
Ah, would to heaven that, dying, I had felt
That day the stroke of fate, when me the dead
Achilles guarding, with a thousand spears 370
Troy's furious host assail'd ! Funereal rites
I then had shared, and praise from every Greek,
Whom now the most inglorious death awaits.

While thus he spake, a billow on his head
Bursting impetuous, whirl'd the raft around, 375
And dashing from his grasp the helm, himself
Plunged far remote. Then came a sudden gust
Of mingling winds, that in the middle snapp'd
His mast, and hurried o'er the waves afar,
Both sail and sail-yard fell into the flood. 380
Long time submerged he lay, nor could with ease
The violence of that dread shock surmount,
Or rise to air again, so burthensome
His drench'd apparel proved ; but, at the last,
He rose, and rising, sputter'd from his lips 385
The brine that trickled copious from his brows.
Nor, harass'd as he was, resign'd he yet
His raft, but buffetting the waves aside
With desperate efforts, seized it, and again
Fast seated on the middle deck, escaped. 390
Then roll'd the raft at random in the flood,
Wallowing unwieldy, toss'd from wave to wave.
As when in autumn, Boreas o'er the plain
Conglomerated thorns before him drives,

They, tangled, to each other close adhere, 395
 So her the winds drove wild about the Deep.
 By turns the South consign'd her to be sport
 For the rude North-wind, and by turns, the East
 Yielded her to the worrying West a prey.
 But Cadmus' beauteous daughter (Ino once, 400
 Now named Leucothea) saw him ; mortal erst
 Was she, and trod the earth², but nymph become
 Of Ocean since, in honours shares divine.
 She mark'd his anguish, and, while toss'd he roam'd,
 Pitied Ulysses ; from the flood, in form 405
 A cormorant, she flew, and on the raft
 Close-corded perching, thus the Chief address'd.
 Alas, unhappy ! how hast thou incensed
 So terribly the Shaker of the shores,
 That he pursues thee with such numerous ills ? 410
 Sink thee he cannot, wish it as he may.
 Thus do, (for I account thee not unwise,)
 Thy garments putting off, let drive thy raft
 As the winds will, then swimming, strive to reach
 Phæacia, where thy doom is to escape. 415
 Take this. This ribbon bind beneath thy breast,
 Celestial texture. Thenceforth every fear
 Of death dismiss, and laying once thy hands
 On the firm continent, unbind the zone,
 Which thou shalt cast far distant from the shore 420
 Into the Deep, turning thy face away.
 So saying, the Goddess gave into his hand
 The wondrous zone, and cormorant in form,
 Plunging herself into the waves again
 Headlong, was hidden by the closing flood. 425
 But still Ulysses sat perplex'd, and thus
 The toil-enduring Hero reason'd sad.
 Alas ! I tremble lest some God design
 To ensnare me yet, bidding me quit the raft.
 But let me well beware how I obey 430
 Too soon that precept, for I saw the land
 Of my foretold deliverance far remote.
 Thus, therefore, will I do, for such appears

² The translator finding himself free to choose between *αὐδηΐσσα* and *οὐδηΐσσα*, has preferred the latter.

My wiser course. So long as yet the planks
Mutual adhere, continuing on board 435
My raft, I will endure whatever woes ;
But when the waves shall shatter it, I will swim,
My sole resource then left. While thus he mused,
Neptune a billow of enormous bulk
Hollow'd into an overwhelming arch 440
On high up-heaving, smote him. As the wind
Tempestuous, falling on some stubble-heap,
The arid straws dissipates every way,
So flew the timbers. He, a single beam
Bestriding, oar'd it onward with his feet, 445
As he had urged an horse. His raiment, then,
Gift of Calypso, putting off, he bound
His girdle on, and prone into the sea
With wide-spread palms prepared for swimming, fell.
Shore-shaker Neptune noted him ; he shook 450
His awful brows, and in his heart he said.

Thus, suffering many miseries, roam the flood,
Till thou shalt mingle with a race of men,
Heaven's special favourites ; yet even there
Fear not that thou shalt feel thy sorrows light. 455

He said, and scourging his bright steeds, arrived
At Ægæ, where his glorious palace stands.

But other thoughts Minerva's mind employ'd
Jove's daughter ; every wind binding beside,
She lull'd them, and enjoin'd them all to sleep, 460
But roused swift Boreas, and the billows broke
Before Ulysses, that, delivered safe
From a dire death, the noble Chief might mix
With maritime Phæacia's sons renown'd.

Two nights he wander'd, and two days, the flood 465
Tempestuous, death expecting every hour ;
But when Aurora, radiant-hair'd, had brought
The third day to a close, then ceased the wind,
And breathless came a calm ; he nigh at hand
The shore beheld, darting acute his sight 470
Toward it, from a billow's towering top.

Precious as to his children seems the life
Of some fond father through disease long-time
And pain stretch'd languid on his couch, the prey

Of some vindictive Power, but now, 'at last,
 By gracious heaven to ease and health restored,
 So grateful to Ulysses' sight appear'd
 Forests and hills. Impatient with his feet
 To press the shore, he swam; but when within
 Such distance as a shout may fly, he came,
 The thunder of the sea against the rocks
 Then smote his ear; for hoarse the billows roar'd
 On the firm land, belch'd horrible abroad,
 And the salt spray dimm'd all things to his view.
 For neither port for ships nor sheltering cove
 Was there, but the rude coast a headland bluff
 Presented, rocks and craggy masses huge.
 Then, hope and strength exhausted both, deep-groan'd
 The Chief, and in his noble heart complain'd.
 Alas! though Jove hath given me to behold,
 Unhoped the land again, and I have pass'd,
 Furrowing my way, these numerous waves, there seems
 No egress from the hoary flood for me.
 Sharp stones hem in the waters; wild the surge
 Raves everywhere; and smooth the rocks arise;
 Deep also is the shore on which my feet
 No standing gain, or chance of safe escape.
 What if some billow catch me from the Deep
 Emerging, and against the pointed rocks
 Dash me conflicting with its force in vain?
 But should I, swimming, trace the coast in search
 Of sloping beach, haven or shelter'd creek,
 I fear lest, groaning, I be snatch'd again
 By stormy gusts into the fishy Deep,
 Or lest some monster of the flood receive
 Command to seize me, of the many such
 By the illustrious Amphitrite bred;
 For that the mighty Shaker of the shores
 Hates me implacable, too well I know.
 While such discourse within himself he held,
 A huge wave heaved him on the rugged coast,
 Where flay'd his flesh had been, and all his bones
 Broken together, but for the infused
 Good counsel of Minerva azure-eyed.
 With both hands suddenly he seized the rock,

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And groaning, clench'd it till the billow pass'd.
So baffled he that wave; but yet again
The reflux flood rush'd on him, and with force
Resistless dash'd him far into the sea.
As pebbles to the hollow polypus 520
Extracted from his stony bed, adhere,
So he, the rough rocks clasping, stripp'd his hands
Raw, and the billows now whelm'd him again.
Then had the hapless Hero premature
Perish'd, but for sagacity inspired 525
By Pallas azure-eyed. Forth from the waves
Emerging, where the surf burst on the rocks,
He coasted (looking landward as he swam)
The shore, with hope of port or level beach.
But when, still swimming, to the mouth he came 530
Of a smooth sliding river, there he deem'd
Safest the ascent, for it was undeform'd
By rocks, and shelter'd close from every wind.
He felt the current, and thus, ardent, pray'd.
Oh hear, whate'er thy name, Sovereign who rulest 535
This river! at whose mouth from all the threats
Of Neptune 'scaped, with rapture I arrive.
Even the immortal Gods the wanderer's prayer
Respect, and such am I, who reach, at length,
Thy stream, and clasp thy knees, after long toil. 540
I am thy suppliant. Oh King! pity me.
He said; the river God at once repress'd
His current, and it ceased; smooth he prepared
The way before Ulysses, and the land
Vouchsafed him easy at his channel's mouth. 545
There once again he bent for ease his limbs,
Both arms and knees, in conflict with the floods
Exhausted; swoln his body was all o'er,
And from his mouth and nostrils stream'd the brine.
Breathless and speechless, and of life well nigh 550
Bereft he lay, through dreadful toil immense.
But when, revived, his dissipated powers
He recollected, loosing from beneath
His breast the zone divine, he cast it far
Into the brackish stream, and a huge wave 555
Returning bore it downward to the sea,

Where Ino caught it. Then, the river's brink
Abandoning among the rushes prone

He lay, kiss'd oft the soil, and sighing, said,

Ah me! what sufferings must I now sustain, 560

What doom, at last, awaits me? If I watch

This woeful night, here, at the river's side,

What hope but that the frost and copious dews,

Weak as I am, my remnant small of life

Shall quite extinguish, and the chilly air 565

Breathed from the river at the dawn of day?

But if, ascending this declivity,

I gain the woods, and in some thicket sleep,

(If sleep indeed can find me overtoil'd

And cold-benumb'd,) then I have cause to fear 570

Lest I be torn by wild beast and devour'd.

Long time he mused, but at the last his course

Bent to the woods, which not remote he saw

From the sea-brink, conspicuous on a hill.

Arrived, between two neighbour shrubs he crept, 575

Both olives, this the fruitful, that the wild;

A covert, which nor rough winds blowing moist

Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun

Smite through it, or unceasing showers pervade,

So thick a roof the ample branches form'd 580

Close interwoven; under these the Chief

Retiring, with industrious hands a bed

Collected broad of leaves, which there he found

Abundant strew'd, such store as had sufficed

Two travellers or three for covering warm, 585

Though winter's roughest blasts had rag'd the while.

That bed with joy the suffering Chief renown'd

Contemplated, and occupying soon

The middle space, hillock'd it high with leaves.

As when some swain hath hidden deep his torch 590

Beneath the embers, at the verge extreme

Of all his farm, where, having neighbours none,

He saves a seed or two of future flame

Alive, doom'd else to fetch it from afar,

So with dry leaves Ulysses overspread 595

His body, on whose eyes Minerva pour'd

The balm of sleep copious, that he might taste

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

Minerva designing an interview between the daughter of Alcinoüs and Ulysses, admonishes her in a dream to carry down her clothes to the river, that she may wash them, and make them ready for her approaching nuptials. That task performed, the Princess and her train amuse themselves with play; by accident they awake Ulysses; he comes forth from the wood, and applies himself with much address to Nausicaa, who compassionating his distressed condition, and being much affected by the dignity of his appearance, interests herself in his favour, and conducts him to the city.

THERE then the noble sufferer lay, by sleep
 Oppress'd and labour; meantime, Pallas sought
 The populous city of Phæacia's sons.
 They, in old time, in Hypereia dwelt
 The spacious, neighbours of a giant race, 5
 The haughty Cyclops, who, endued with power
 Superior, troubled them with frequent wrongs.
 Godlike Nausithoüs then arose, who thence
 To Scheria led them, from all nations versed
 In arts of cultivated life, remote; 10
 With bulwarks strong their city he enclosed,
 Built houses for them, temples to the Gods,
 And gave to each a portion of the soil.
 But he already by decree of fate
 Had journey'd to the shades, and in his stead 15
 Alcinoüs, by the Gods instructed, reign'd.
 To his abode Minerva azure-eyed
 Repair'd, neglecting nought which might advance
 Magnanimous Ulysses' safe return.
 She sought the sumptuous chamber where, in form 20
 And feature perfect as the Gods, the young
 Nausicaa, daughter of the King, reposed.
 Fast by the pillars of the portal lay
 Two damsels, one on either side, adorn'd
 By all the Graces, and the doors were shut. 25

Soft as a breathing air, she stole toward
 The royal virgin's couch, and at her head
 Standing, address'd her. Daughter she appear'd
 Of Dymas famed for maritime exploits,
 Her friend and her coeval ; so disguised
 Cœrulean-eyed Minerva thus began.

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Nausicaa ! wherefore hath thy mother borne
 A child so negligent ? Thy garments share,
 Thy most magnificent, no thought of thine.
 Yet thou must marry soon, and must provide
 Robes for thyself, and for thy nuptial train.
 Thy fame on these concerns and honour stand ;
 These managed well, thy parents shall rejoice.
 The dawn appearing, let us to the place
 Of washing, where thy work-mate I will be
 For speedier riddance of thy task, since soon
 The days of thy virginity shall end ;
 For thou art woo'd already by the prime
 Of all Phæacia, country of thy birth.
 Come then, solicit at the dawn of day
 Thy royal father, that he send thee forth
 With mules and carriage for conveyance hence
 Of thy best robes, thy mantles and thy zones.
 Thus more commodiously thou shalt perform
 The journey, for the cisterns lie remote.

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So saying, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
 Rose to Olympus, the reputed seat
 Eternal of the Gods, which never storms
 Disturb, rains drench, or snow invades, but calm
 The expanse and cloudless shines with purest day.
 There the inhabitants divine rejoice
 For ever, and (her admonition given)
 Cœrulean-eyed Minerva thither flew.

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Now came Aurora bright enthroned, whose rays
 Awaken'd fair Nausicaa ; she her dream
 Remember'd wondering, and her parents sought,
 Anxious to tell them. Them she found within.
 Beside the hearth her royal mother sat,
 Spinning soft fleeces with sea-purple dyed
 Among her menial maidens, but she met
 Her father, whom the Nobles of the land

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Had summon'd, issuing abroad to join
The illustrious Chiefs in council. At his side
She stood, and thus her filial suit preferr'd.

Sir! wilt thou lend me of the royal wains 70
A sumpter-carriage? for I wish to bear
My costly clothes, but sullied and unfit
For use, at present, to the river-side.
It is but seemly that thou should'st repair
Thyself to consultation with the Chiefs 75
Of all Phæacia, clad in pure attire;
And my own brothers five, who dwell at home,
Two wedded, and the rest of age to wed,
Are all desirous, when they dance, to wear
Raiment new bleach'd; all which is my concern. 80

So spake Nausicaa; for she dared not name
Her own glad nuptials to her father's ear,
Who, conscious yet of all her drift, replied.

I grudge thee neither mules, my child, nor aught 85
That thou canst ask beside. Go, and my train
Shall furnish thee a sumpter-carriage forth
High-built, strong-wheel'd, and of capacious size.

So saying, he issued his command, whom quick
His grooms obey'd. They in the court prepared
The sumpter-carriage, and adjoin'd the mules. 90

And now the virgin from her chamber, charged
With raiment, came, which on the car she placed,
And in the carriage-chest, meantime, the Queen,
Her mother, viands of all kinds disposed,
And fill'd a skin with wine. Nausicaa rose 95

Into her seat; but, ere she went, received
A golden cruse of oil from the Queen's hand
For unction of herself and of her maids.
Then, seizing scourge and reins, she lash'd the mules.
They trampled loud the soil, straining to draw 100
Herself with all her vesture; nor alone
She went, but follow'd by her virgin train.
At the delightful rivulet arrived

Where those perennial cisterns were prepared

¹ In the Original, she calls him *papa*! a more natural style of address, and more endearing. But ancient as this appellative is, it is also so familiar in modern use, that the Translator feared to hazard it.

With purest crystal of the fountain fed 105
 Profuse, sufficient for the deepest stains,
 Loosing the mules, they drove them forth to browse
 On the sweet herb beside the dimpled flood.
 The carriage, next, lightening, they bore in hand
 The garments down to the unsullied wave, 110
 And thrust them heaped into the pools, their task
 Dispatching brisk, and with an emulous haste.
 When they had all purified, and no spot
 Could now be seen or blemish more, they spread
 The raiment orderly along the beach 115
 Where dashing tides had cleansed the pebbles most,
 And laving, next, and smoothing o'er with oil
 Their limbs, all seated on the river's bank,
 They took repast, leaving the garments, stretch'd
 In noon-day fervour of the sun, to dry. 120
 Their hunger satisfied, at once arose
 The mistress and her train, and putting off
 Their head-attire, play'd wanton with the ball,
 The princess singing to her maids the while.
 Such as shaft-arm'd Diana roams the hills, 125
 Táygetus sky-capt, or Erymanth,
 The wild boar chasing, or fleet-footed hind,
 All joy; the rural nymphs, daughters of Jove,
 Sport with her, and Latona's heart exults;
 She high her graceful head above the rest 130
 And features lifts divine, though all be fair,
 With ease distinguishable from them all;
 So all her train she, virgin pure, surpass'd.
 But when the hour of her departure thence
 Approach'd, (the mules now yoked again, and all 135
 Her elegant apparel folded neat,)
 Minerva azure-eyed mused how to wake
 Ulysses, that he might behold the fair
 Virgin, his destined guide into the town.
 The Princess, then, casting the ball toward 140
 A maiden of her train, erroneous threw,
 And plunged it deep into the dimpling stream.
 All shriek'd; Ulysses at the sound awoke,
 And, sitting, meditated thus the cause.
 Ah me! what mortal race inhabit here? 145

Rude are they, contumacious and unjust?
Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods?
So shrill the cry and feminine of nymphs
Fills all the air around, such as frequent
The hills, clear fountains, and herbaceous meads. 150
Is this a neighbourhood of men endued
With voice articulate? But what avails
To ask? I will myself go forth and see.

So saying, divine Ulysses from beneath
His thicket crept, and from the leafy wood 155
A spreading branch pluck'd forcibly, design'd
A decent screen effectual, held before.

So forth he went, as goes the lion forth,
The mountain-lion, conscious of his strength,
Whom winds have vexed and rains; fire fills his eyes, 160
And whether herds or flocks, or woodland deer

He find, he rends them, and adust for blood,
Abstains not even from the guarded fold,
Such sure to seem in virgin eyes, the Chief,
All naked as he was, left his retreat, 165
Reluctant, by necessity constrain'd.

Him foul with sea-foam horror-struck they view'd,
And o'er the jutting shores fled all dispersed.
Nausicaa alone fled not; for her
Pallas courageous made, and from her limbs, 170
By power divine, all tremor took away.

Firm she expected him; he doubtful stood,
Or to implore the lovely maid, her knees
Embracing, or, aloof standing, to ask
In gentle terms discreet the gift of clothes, 175
And guidance to the city where she dwelt.

Him so deliberating, most, at length,
This counsel pleased; in suppliant terms aloof
To sue to her, lest if he clasp'd her knees,
The virgin should that bolder course resent. 180
Then gentle, thus, and well-advised he spake.

Oh Queen! thy earnest suppliant I approach.
Art thou some Goddess, or of mortal race?
For if some Goddess, and from heaven arrived,
Diana, then, daughter of mighty Jove 185
I deem thee most, for such as hers appear

Thy form, thy stature, and thy air divine.
 But if, of mortal race, thou dwell below,
 Thrice happy then, thy parents I account,
 And happy thrice thy brethren. Ah! the joy 190
 Which always for thy sake their bosoms fills,
 When thee they view, all lovely as thou art,
 Entering majestic on the graceful dance.
 But him beyond all others blest I deem,
 The youth, who, wealthier than his rich compeers, 195
 Shall win and lead thee to his honour'd home.
 For never with these eyes a mortal form
 Beheld I comparable aught to thine,
 In man or woman. Wonder-rapt I gaze.
 Such erst, in Delos, I beheld a palm 200
 Beside the altar of Apollo, tall,
 And growing still; (for thither too I sail'd,
 And numerous were my followers in a voyage
 Ordain'd my ruin,) and as I then view'd
 That palm long time amazed, for never grew 205
 So straight a shaft, so lovely from the ground,
 So, Princess! thee with wonder I behold,
 Charm'd into fixt astonishment, by awe
 Alone forbidden to embrace thy knees,
 For I am one on whom much woe hath fallen. 210
 Yesterday I escaped (the twentieth day
 Of my distress by sea) the dreary Deep;
 For, all those days, the waves and rapid storms
 Bore me along, impetuous, from the isle
 Ogygia; till at length the will of heaven 215
 Cast me, that I might also here sustain
 Affliction on your shore; for rest, I think,
 Is not for me. No. The immortal Gods
 Have much to accomplish ere that day arrive.
 But, oh Queen, pity me! who after long* 220
 Calamities endured, of all who live
 Thee first approach, nor mortal know beside
 Of the inhabitants of all the land.
 Shew me your city; give me, although coarse,
 Some covering, (if coarse covering *thou* canst give,) 225
 And may the Gods thy largest wishes grant,
 House, husband, concord! for of all the gifts

Of heaven, more precious none I deem, than peace
'Twixt wedded pair, and union undissolved ;
Envy torments their enemies, but joy
Fills every virtuous breast, and most their own.

230

To whom Nausicaa the fair replied.

Since, stranger ! neither base by birth thou seem'st,
Nor unintelligent, (but Jove, the King
Olympian, gives to good and bad alike
Prosperity according to his will,

235

And grief to thee, which thou must patient bear,)
Now, therefore, at our land and city arrived,
Nor garment thou shalt want, nor aught beside
Due to a suppliant guest like thee forlorn.

240

I will both show thee where our city stands,
And who dwell here. Phæacia's sons possess
This land ; but I am daughter of their King,
The brave Alcinoüs, on whose sway depends
For strength and wealth the whole Phæacian race.

245

She said, and to her beauteous maidens gave
Instant commandment :—My attendants, stay !
Why flee ye thus, and whither, from the sight
Of a mere mortal ? Seems he in your eyes
Some enemy of ours ? The heart beats not,
Nor shall it beat hereafter, which shall come
An enemy to the Phæacian shores,
So dear to the immortal Gods are we.

250

Remote, amid the billowy Deep, we hold
Our dwelling, utmost of all human-kind,
And free from mixture with a foreign race.
This man a miserable wanderer comes,

255

Whom we are bound to cherish, for the poor
And stranger are from Jove, and trivial gifts
To such are welcome. Bring ye therefore food
And wine, my maidens, for the guest's regale,
And lave him where the stream is shelter'd most.

260

She spake ; they stood, and by each other's words
Encouraged, placed Ulysses where the bank
O'erhung the stream, as fair Nausicaa bade,
Daughter of King Alcinoüs the renown'd.
Apparel also at his side they spread,
Mantle and vest, and next, the limpid oil

265

Presenting to him in the golden cruse,
Exhorted him to bathe in the clear stream. 270

Ulysses then the maidens thus bespake.

Ye maidens, stand apart, that I may cleanse,
Myself, my shoulders from the briny surf,
And give them oil which they have wanted long.
But in your presence I bathe not, ashamed 275
To show myself unclothed to female eyes.

He said ; they went, and to Nausicaa told
His answer ; then the Hero in the stream
His shoulders laved, and loins incrustured rough
With the salt spray, and with his hands the scum 280

Of the wild ocean from his locks express'd.
Thus wash'd all over, and refresh'd with oil,
He put the garments on Nausicaa's gift.
Then Pallas, progeny of Jove, his form
Dilated more, and from his head diffused 285
His curling locks like hyacinthine flowers.

As when some artist, by Minerva made
And Vulcan wise to execute all tasks
Ingenious, binding with a golden verge
Bright silver, finishes a graceful work, 290

Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest
Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows.
Retiring, on the beach he sat, with grace
And dignity illumed, where, viewing him,
The virgin Princess with amazement mark'd 295
His beauty, and her damsels thus bespake.

My white-arm'd maidens, listen to my voice !
Not hated, sure, by all above, this man
Among Phæacia's godlike sons arrives.
At first I deem'd him of plebeian sort 300
Dishonourable, but he now assumes
A near resemblance to the Gods above.

Ah ! would to heaven it were my lot to call
Husband some native of our land like him
Accomplish'd, and content to inhabit here ! 305
Give him, my maidens, food, and give him wine.

She ended ; they, obedient to her will,
Both wine and food, dispatchful, placed, and glad,
Before Ulysses ; he rapacious ate,

Toil-suffering Chief, and drank, for he had lived
From taste of aliment long time estranged. 310

On other thoughts meantime intent, her charge
Of folded vestments neat the Princess placed
Within the royal wain, then yoked the mules,
And to her seat herself ascending call'd 315
Ulysses to depart, and thus she spake.

Up, stranger! seek the city. I will lead
Thy steps toward my royal Father's house,
Where all Phæacia's Nobles thou shalt see.
But thou (for I account thee not unwise,) 320

This course pursue. While through the fields we pass,
And labours of the rural hind, so long
With my attendants follow fast the mules
And sumpter-carriage. I will be thy guide.

But, once the summit gain'd, on which is built 325

Our city with proud bulwarks fenced around,
And laved on both sides by its pleasant port
Of narrow entrance, where our gallant barks
Line all the road, each station'd in her place,
And where, adjoining close the splendid fane 330

Of Neptune, stands the forum with huge stones
From quarries thither drawn, constructed strong,
In which the rigging of their barks they keep,
Sail-cloth and cordage, and make smooth their oars;
(For bow and quiver the Phæacian race 335

Heed not, but masts and oars, and ships well-poised,
With which exulting they divide the flood,)

Then, cautious, I would shun their bitter taunts
Disgustful, lest they mock me as I pass;
For of the meaner people some are coarse 340

In the extreme, and it may chance that one,
The basest there, seeing us, shall exclaim,—
What handsome stranger of athletic form
Attends the Princess? Where had she the chance
To find him? We shall see them wedded soon. 345

Either she hath received some vagrant guest
From distant lands, (for no land neighbours ours,)
Or by her prayers incessant won, some God
Hath left the heavens to be for ever hers.
'Tis well if she have found, by her own search, 350

An husband for herself, since she accounts
 The nobles of Phæacia, who her hand
 Solicit numerous worthy to be scorn'd.—
 Thus will they speak injurious. I should blame
 A virgin guilty of such conduct much, 355
 Myself, who reckless of her parents' will,
 Should so familiar with a man consort,
 Ere celebration of her spousal rites.
 But mark me, stranger! following my advice,
 Thou shalt the sooner at my father's hands 360
 Obtain safe conduct and conveyance home.
 Sacred to Pallas a delightful grove
 Of poplar skirts the road, which we shall reach
 Ere long; within that grove a fountain flows,
 And meads encircle it; my father's farm 365
 Is there, and his luxuriant garden-plot;
 A shout might reach it from the city-walls.
 There wait, till in the town arrived, we gain
 My father's palace, and when reason bids
 Suppose us there, then entering thou the town, 370
 Ask where Alcinoüs dwells, my valiant Sire.
 Well known is his abode, so that with ease
 A child might lead thee to it, for in nought
 The other houses of our land the house
 Resemble, in which dwells the Hero, King 375
 Alcinoüs. Once within the court received
 Pause not, but, with swift pace advancing, seek
 My mother; she beside a column sits
 In the hearth's blaze, twirling her fleecy threads
 Tinged with sea-purple, bright, magnificent, 380
 With all her maidens orderly behind.
 There also stands my father's throne, on which
 Seated, he drinks and banquets like a God.
 Pass that; then suppliant clasp my mother's knees,
 So shalt thou quickly win a glad return 385
 To thy own home, however far remote.
 Her favour once, and her kind aid secured,
 Thenceforth thou may'st expect thy friends to see,
 Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.
 So saying, she with her splendid scourge the mules 390
 Lash'd onward. They (the stream soon left behind,)

With even footsteps graceful smote the ground ;
But so she ruled them, managing with art
The scourge, as not to leave afar, although
Following on foot, Ulysses and her train. 395
The sun had now declined, when in that grove
Renown'd, to Pallas sacred, they arrived,
In which Ulysses sat, and fervent thus
Sued to the daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd.

Daughter invincible of Jove supreme ! 400
Oh, hear me ! hear me now, because when erst
The mighty Shaker of the shores incensed
Toss'd me from wave to wave, thou heard'st me not.
Grant me among Phæacia's sons to find
Benevolence and pity of my woes ! 405

He spake, whose prayer well-pleased the Goddess heard,
But reverencing the brother² of her sire,
Appear'd not to Ulysses yet, whom he
Pursued with fury to his native shores.

² Neptune.

BOOK VII.

A R G U M E N T.

Nausicaa returns from the river, whom Ulysses follows. He halts by her direction, at a small distance from the palace, which at a convenient time he enters. He is well received by Alcinoüs and his Queen; and having related to them the manner of his being cast on the shore of Scheria, and received from Alcinoüs the promise of safe conduct home, retires to rest.

SUCH prayer Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd,
 To Pallas made; meantime the virgin, drawn
 By her stout mules, Phæacia's city reach'd,
 And, at her father's house arrived, the car
 Stay'd in the vestibule; her brothers five, 5
 All godlike youths, assembling quick around,
 Released the mules, and bore the raiment in.
 Meantime, to her own chamber she return'd,
 Where, soon as she arrived, an ancient dame
 Eurymedusa, by peculiar charge 10
 Attendant on that service, kindled fire.
 Sea-rovers her had from Epirus brought
 Long since, and to Alcinoüs she had fallen
 By public gift, for that he ruled, supreme,
 Phæacia, and as oft as he harangued 15
 The multitude, was revered as a God.
 She waited on the fair Nausicaa, she
 Her fuel kindled, and her food prepared.
 And now Ulysses from his seat arose
 To seek the city, around whom, his guard 20
 Benevolent, Minerva, cast a cloud,
 Lest, haply, some Phæacian should presume
 To insult the Chief, and question whence he came.
 But ere he enter'd yet the pleasant town,
 Minerva azure-eyed met him, in form 25
 A blooming maid, bearing her pitcher forth.

She stood before him, and the noble Chief
Ulysses, of the Goddess thus enquired.

Daughter! wilt thou direct me to the house
Of brave Alcinoüs, whom this land obeys?
For I have here arrived, after long toil,
And from a country far remote, a guest
To all who in Phæacia dwell, unknown.

30

To whom the Goddess of the azure-eyes.
The mansion of thy search, stranger revered!
Myself will shew thee; for not distant dwells
Alcinoüs from my father's own abode:
But hush! be silent—I will lead the way;
Mark no man; question no man; for the sight
Of strangers is unusual here, and cold
The welcome by this people shown to such.
They, trusting in swift ships, by the free grant
Of Neptune traverse his wide waters, borne
As if on wings, or with the speed of thought.

35

40

So spake the Goddess, and with nimble pace
Led on, whose footsteps he, as quick, pursued.
But still the seaman-throng through whom he pass'd
Perceived him not; Minerva, Goddess dread,
That sight forbidding them, whose eyes she dimm'd
With darkness shed miraculous around
Her favourite Chief. Ulysses, wondering, mark'd
Their port, their ships. their forum, the resort
Of Heroes, and their battlements sublime
Fenced with sharp stakes around, a glorious show!
But when the King's august abode he reach'd,
Minerva azure-eyed, then thus began.

45

50

55

My father! thou behold'st the house to which
Thou badest me lead thee. Thou shalt find our Chiefs
And high-born Princes banquetting within.
But enter fearing nought, for boldest men
Speed ever best, come whencesoe'er they may.
First thou shalt find the Queen, known by her name
Areta; lineal in descent from those
Who gave Alcinoüs birth, her royal spouse.
Neptune begat Nausithoüs, at the first,
On Peribœa, loveliest of her sex,
Latest-born daughter of Eurymedon,

60

65

Heroic King of the proud giant race,
 Who, losing all his impious people, shared
 The same dread fate himself. Her Neptune loved, 70
 To whom she bore a son, the mighty prince
 Nausithoüs, in his day King of the land.
 Nausithoüs himself two sons begat,
 Rhexenor and Alcinoüs. Phœbus slew
 Rhexenor at his home, a bridegroom yet, 75
 Who, father of no son, one daughter left,
 Areta, wedded to Alcinoüs now,
 And whom the Sovereign in such honour holds,
 As woman none enjoys of all on earth
 Existing, subjects of an husband's power. 80
 Like veneration she from all receives
 Unfeign'd, from her own children, from himself
 Alcinoüs, and from all Phæacia's race,
 Who, gazing on her as she were divine,
 Shout when she moves in progress through the town, 85
 For she no wisdom wants, but sits, herself,
 Arbitress of such contests as arise
 Between her favourites, and decides aright.
 Her countenance once and her kind aid secured,
 Thou may'st thenceforth expect thy friends to see, 90
 Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.
 So Pallas spake, Goddess cœrulean-eyed,
 And o'er the untillable and barren Deep
 Departing, Scheria left, land of delight,
 Whence reaching Marathon, and Athens next, 95
 She pass'd into Erectheus' fair abode.
 Ulysses, then, toward the palace moved
 Of King Alcinoüs, but immersed in thought
 Stood, first, and paused, ere with his foot he press'd
 The brazen threshold ; for a light he saw 100
 As of the sun or moon illuming clear
 The palace of Phæacia's mighty King.
 Walls plated bright with brass, on either side
 Stretch'd from the portal to the interior house,
 With azure cornice crown'd ; the doors were gold 105
 Which shut the palace fast ; silver the posts
 Rear'd on a brazen threshold, and above,
 The lintels, silver, architaved with gold.

Mastiffs, in gold and silver, lined the approach
 On either side, by art celestial framed 110
 Of Vulcan, guardians of Alcinoüs gate
 For ever, unobnoxious to decay.
 Sheer from the threshold to the inner house
 Fixt thrones the walls, through all their length, adorn'd,
 With mantles overspread of subtlest warp 115
 Transparent, work of many a female hand.
 On these the princes of Phæacia sat,
 Holding perpetual feasts, while golden youths
 On all the sumptuous altars stood, their hands
 With burning torches charged, which, night by night, 120
 Shed radiance over all the festive throng.
 Full fifty female menials served the King
 In household offices; the rapid mills
 These turning, pulverize the mellow'd grain,
 Those, seated orderly, the purple fleece 125
 Wind off, or ply the loom, restless as leaves
 Of lofty poplars fluttering in the breeze;
 'Bright as with oil the new-wrought texture shone.
 Far as Phæacian mariners all else
 Surpass, the swift ship urging through the floods, 130
 So far in tissue-work the women pass
 All others, by Minerva's self endow'd
 With richest fancy and superior skill.
 Without the court, and to the gates adjoin'd
 A spacious garden lay, fenced all around 135
 Secure, four acres measuring complete.
 There grew luxuriant many a lofty tree,
 Pomegranate, pear, the apple blushing bright,
 The honied fig, and unctuous olive smooth.
 Those fruits, nor winter's cold nor summer's heat 140
 Fear ever, fail not, wither not, but hang
 Perennial, while unceasing zephyr breathes
 Gently on all, enlarging these, and those
 Maturing genial; in an endless course
 Pears after pears to full dimensions swell, 145

¹ Καίροσέων δ' ὀθονεων ἀπολείβεται ὕγρον ἔλαιον.

Pope has given no translation of this line in the text of his work, but has translated it in a note. It is variously interpreted by commentators; the sense which is here given of it is that recommended by Eustathius.

Figs follow figs, grapes clustering grow again
 Where clusters grew, and (every apple stript)
 The boughs soon tempt the gatherer as before.
 There too, well-rooted, and of fruit profuse,
 His vineyard grows ; part, wide-extended, basks 150
 In the sun's beams ; the arid level glows ;
 In part they gather, and in part they tread
 The wine-press, while, before the eye, the grapes
 Here put their blossom forth, there, gather fast
 Their blackness. On the garden's verge extreme 155
 Flowers of all hues smile all the year, arranged
 With neatest art judicious ; and amid
 The lovely scene two fountains welling forth,
 One visits, into every part diffused,
 The garden-ground, the other soft beneath 160
 The threshold steals into the palace-court,
 Whence every citizen his vase supplies.

Such were the ample blessings on the house
 Of King Alcinoüs by the Gods bestow'd.

Ulysses wondering stood, and when, at length, 165
 Silent he had the whole fair scene admired,
 With rapid step enter'd the royal gate.
 The chiefs he found and Senators within
 Libation pouring to the vigilant spy
 Mercurius, whom with wine they worshipp'd last 170
 Of all the Gods, and at the hour of rest.
 Ulysses, toil-worn Hero, through the house
 Pass'd undelaying, by Minerva thick
 With darkness circumfused, till he arrived
 Where King Alcinoüs and Areta sat. 175
 Around Areta's knees his arms he cast,
 And in that moment, broken clear away
 The cloud all went, shed on him from above.
 Dumb sat the guests, seeing the unknown Chief,
 And wondering gazed. He thus his suit preferr'd. 180

Areta, daughter of the Godlike Prince
 Rhexenor ! suppliant at thy knees I fall,
 Thy royal spouse imploring, and thyself,
 (After ten thousand toils), and these your guests,
 To whom heaven grant felicity, and to leave 185
 Their treasures to their babes, with all the rights

And honours, by the people's suffrage, theirs !
But oh vouchsafe me, who have wanted long
And ardent wish'd my home, without delay
Safe conduct to my native shores again ! 190

Such suit he made, and in the ashes sat
At the hearth-side ; they mute long time remain'd,
Till, at the last, the ancient Hero spake
Echeneus, eldest of Phæacia's sons,
With eloquence beyond the rest endow'd, 195
Rich in traditionary lore, and wise
In all, who thus, benevolent, began.

Not honourable to thyself, O King !
Is such a sight, a stranger on the ground
At the hearth-side seated, and in the dust. 200
Meantime, thy guests, expecting thy command,
Move not ; thou, therefore, raising by his hand
The stranger, lead him to a throne, and bid
The heralds mingle wine, that we may pour
To thunder-bearing Jove, the suppliant's friend. 205
Then let the cateress for thy guest produce
Supply, a supper from the last regale.

Soon as those words Alcinoüs heard, the King,
Uprising by his hand the prudent Chief
Ulysses from the hearth, he made him sit 210
On a bright throne, displacing for his sake
Laodamas his son, the virtuous youth
Who sat beside him, and whom most he loved.
And now, a maiden charged with golden ewer
And with an argent laver, pouring, first, 215
Pure water on his hands, supplied him, next,
With a resplendent table, which the chaste
Directress of the stores furnish'd with bread
And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
Then ate the Hero toil-inured, and drank, 220
And to his herald thus Alcinoüs spake.

Pontonoüs ! mingling wine, bear it around
To every guest in turn, that we may pour
To thunder-bearer Jove, the stranger's friend,
And guardian of the suppliant's sacred rights. 225

He said ; Pontonoüs, as he bade, the wine
Mingled delicious, and the cups dispensed

With distribution regular to all.

When each had made libation, and had drunk
Sufficient, then Alcinoüs thus began.

230

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, I speak
The dictates of my mind, therefore attend !
Ye all have feasted ;—to your homes and sleep.
We will assemble at the dawn of day

More senior Chiefs, that we may entertain

235

The stranger here, and to the Gods perform
Due sacrifice ; the convoy that he asks
Shall next engage our thoughts, that free from pain
And from vexation, by our friendly aid
He may revisit, joyful and with speed,

240

His native shore, however far remote.
No inconvenience let him feel or harm,
Ere his arrival ; but, arrived, thenceforth
He must endure whatever lot the Fates

245

Spun for him in the moment of his birth.
But should he prove some Deity from heaven
Descended, then the Immortals have in view
Designs not yet apparent ; for the Gods

Have ever from of old reveal'd themselves
At our solemnities, have on our seats
Sat with us evident, and shared the feast ;
And even if a single traveller

250

Of the Phæacians meet them, all reserve
They lay aside ; for with the Gods we boast
As near affinity as do themselves

255

The Cyclops, or the Giant race profane.²

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Alcinoüs ! think not so. Resemblance none
In figure or in lineaments I bear
To the immortal tenants of the skies,
But to the sons of earth ; if ye have known
A man afflicted with a weight of woe
Peculiar, let me be with him compared ;

260

² The Scholiast explains the passage thus :—We resemble the Gods in righteousness as much as the Cyclops and Giants resembled each other in impiety. But in this sense of it there is something intricate, and contrary to Homer's manner. We have seen that they derived themselves from Neptune, which sufficiently justifies the above interpretation.

Woes even passing his could I relate,
And all inflicted on me by the Gods. 265
But let me eat, comfortless as I am,
Uninterrupted; for no call is loud
As that of hunger in the ears of man;
Importunate, unreasonable, it constrains
His notice, more than all his woes beside. 270
So, I much sorrow feel, yet not the less
Hear I the blatant appetite demand
Due sustenance, and with a voice that drowns
Even all my sufferings, till itself be fill'd.
But expedite ye at the dawn of day 275
My safe return into my native land,
After much misery; and let life itself
Forsake me, may I but once more behold
All that is mine, in my own lofty abode.

He spake, whom all applauded, and advised, 280
Unanimous, the guest's conveyance home,
Who had so fitly spoken. When at length,
All had libation made and were sufficed,
Departing to his house, each sought repose.
But still Ulysses in the hall remain'd, 285
Where, godlike King, Alcinoüs at his side
Sat, and Areta; the attendants clear'd
Meantime the board, and thus the Queen white arm'd
(Marking the vest and mantle which he wore,
And which her maidens and herself had made) 290
In accents wing'd with eager haste began.

Stranger! the first enquiry shall be mine;
Who art, and whence? From whom received'st thou these?
Saidst not—I came a wanderer o'er the Deep?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 295
Oh Queen! the task were difficult to unfold
In all its length the story of my woes,
For I have numerous from the Gods received;
But I will answer thee as best I may.
There is a certain isle, Ogygia, placed 300
Far distant in the Deep; there dwells, by man
Alike unvisited and by the Gods,
Calypso, beauteous nymph, but deeply skill'd

In artifice, and terrible in power,
Daughter of Atlas. Me alone my fate 305
Her miserable inmate made, when Jove
Had riven asunder with his candent bolt
My bark in the mid-sea. There perish'd all
The valiant partners of my toils, and I
My vessel's keel embracing day and night 310
With folded arms, nine days was borne along.
But on the tenth dark night, as pleased the Gods,
They drove me to Ogygia, where resides
Calypso, beauteous nymph, dreadful in power ;
She rescued, cherish'd, fed me, and her wish 315
Was to confer on me immortal life,
Exempt for ever from the sap of age.
But me her offer'd boon sway'd not. Seven years
I there abode continual, with my tears.
Bedewing ceaseless my ambrosial robes, 320
Calypso's gift divine ; but when, at length,
(Seven years elapsed) the circling eighth arrived,
She then, herself, my quick departure thence
Advised, by Jove's own mandate overawed,
Which even her had influenced to a change. 325
On a well-corded raft she sent me forth
With numerous presents ; bread she put and wine
On board, and clothed me in immortal robes ;
She sent before me also a fair wind
Fresh-blowing, but not dangerous. Seventeen days 330
I sail'd the flood continual, and descried,
On the eighteenth, your shadowy mountains tall,
When my exulting heart sprang at the sight,
All wretched as I was and still ordain'd
To strive with difficulties many and hard 335
From adverse Neptune ; he the stormy winds
Exciting opposite, my watery way
Impeded, and the waves heaved to a bulk
Immeasurable, such as robb'd me soon
Deep-groaning, of the raft, my only hope ; 340
For her the tempest scatter'd, and myself
This ocean measured swimming, till the winds
And mighty waters cast me on your shore.

Me there emerging, the huge waves had dash'd
Full on the land, where, incommodious most, 345
The shore presented only roughest rocks,
But, leaving it, I swam the Deep again,
Till now, at last, a river's gentle stream
Received me, by no rocks deform'd, and where
No violent winds the shelter'd bank annoy'd. 350
I flung myself on shore, exhausted, weak,
Needing repose; ambrosial night came on,
When from the Jove-descended stream withdrawn,
I in a thicket laid me down on leaves
Which I had heap'd together, and the Gods 355
O'erwhelm'd my eye-lids with a flood of sleep.
There under wither'd leaves, forlorn, I slept
All the long night, the morning, and the noon,
But balmy sleep, at the decline of day,
Broke from me; then, your daughter's train I heard 360
Sporting, with whom she also sported, fair
And graceful as the Gods. To her I kneel'd.
She, following the dictates of a mind
Ingenuous, pass'd in her behaviour all
Which even ye could from an age like hers 365
Have hoped; for youth is ever indiscreet.
She gave me plenteous food, with richest wine
Refresh'd my spirit, taught me where to bathe,
And clothed me as thou seest; thus, though a prey
To many sorrows, I have told thee truth. 370
To whom Alcinoüs answer thus return'd.
My daughter's conduct, I perceive, hath been
In this erroneous, that she led thee not
Hither at once, with her attendant train,
For thy first suit was to herself alone. 375
Thus then Ulysses, wary Chief, replied.
Blame not, O Hero, for so slight a cause,
Thy faultless child; she bade me follow them,
But I refused, by fear and awe restrain'd,
Lest thou should'st feel displeasure at that sight 380
Thyself; for we are all, in every clime,
Suspicious, and to worst constructions prone.
So spake Ulysses, to whom thus the King.

I bear not, stranger ! in my breast an heart
Causeless irascible ; for at all times 385
A temperate equanimity is best.
And oh, I would to heaven, that, being such
As now thou art, and of one mind with me,
Thou would'st accept my daughter, would'st become 390
My son-in-law, and dwell contented here !
House would I give thee, and possessions too,
Were such thy choice ; else, if thou choose it not,
No man in all Phæacia shall by force
Detain thee. Jupiter himself forbid !
For proof, I will appoint thee convoy hence 395
To-morrow ; and while thou by sleep subdued
Shalt on thy bed repose, they with their oars
Shall brush the placid flood, till thou arrive
At home, or at what place soe'er thou would'st,
Though far more distant than Eubœa lies, 400
Remotest isle from us, by the report
Of ours, who saw it when they thither bore
Golden-hair'd Rhadamanthus o'er the Deep,
To visit earth-born Tityus. To that isle
They went ; they reach'd it, and they brought him thence 405
Back to Phæacia, in one day, with ease.
Thou also shalt be taught what ships I boast
Unmatch'd in swiftness, and how far my crews
Excel, upturning with their oars the brine.
He ceased ; Ulysses toil-inured his words 410
Exulting heard, and praying, thus replied.
Eternal Father ! may the King perform
His whole kind promise ! grant him in all lands
A never-dying name, and grant to me
To visit safe my native shores again ! 415
Thus they conferr'd ; and now Areta bade
Her fair attendants dress a fleecy couch
Under the portico, with purple rugs
Resplendent, and with arras spread beneath,
And over all with cloaks of shaggy pile. 420
Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
And, as she bade, prepared in haste a couch
Of depth commodious, then, returning, gave

Ulysses welcome summons to repose.

Stranger! thy couch is spread. Hence to thy rest. 425
So they—Thrice grateful to his soul the thought
Seem'd of repose. There slept Ulysses then,
On his carved couch, beneath the portico,
But in the inner-house Alcinoüs found
His place of rest, and hers with royal state 430
Prepared, the Queen, his consort, at his side.

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Phæacians consult on the subject of Ulysses. Preparation is made for his departure. Alcinoüs entertains them at his table. Games follow the entertainment. Demodocus the bard sings, first the loves of Mars and Venus, then the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy. Ulysses, much affected by his song, is questioned by Alcinoüs, whence and who he is, and what is the cause of his sorrow.

BUT when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Blush'd in the East, then from his bed arose
 The sacred might of the Phæacian King.
 Then uprose also, city-waster Chief,
 Ulysses, whom the King Alcinoüs 5
 Led forth to council at the ships convened.
 There, side by side, on polish'd stones they sat
 Frequent; meantime, Minerva in the form
 Of King Alcinoüs' herald ranged the town,
 With purpose to accelerate the return 10
 Of brave Ulysses to his native home,
 And thus to every Chief the Goddess spake.
 Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, away!
 Haste all to council on the stranger held,
 Who hath of late beneath Alcinoüs' roof 15
 Our King arrived, a wanderer o'er the Deep,
 But in his form majestic as a God.

So saying, she roused the people, and at once
 The seats of all the senate-court were fill'd
 With fast-assembling throngs, no few of whom 20
 Had mark'd Ulysses with admiring eyes.
 Then Pallas o'er his head and shoulders broad
 Diffusing grace celestial, his whole form
 Dilated, and to statelier height advanced,
 That worthier of all reverence he might seem 25
 To the Phæacians, and might many a feat

Achieve, with which they should assay his force.

When, therefore, the assembly now was full,
Alcinoüs, them addressing, thus began.

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators ! I speak 30
The dictates of my mind, therefore attend.

This guest unknown to me, hath, wandering, found
My palace, either from the East arrived,
Or from some nation on our western side.

Safe conduct home he asks, and our consent 35
Here wishes ratified, whose quick return

Be it our part, as usual, to promote ;
For at no time the stranger, from what coast
Soe'er, who hath resorted to our doors,
Hath long complained of his detention here. 40

Haste—draw ye down into the sacred Deep
A vessel of prime speed, and from among

The people, fifty and two youths select,
Approved the best ; then lashing fast the oars,

Leave her, that at my palace ye may make 45
Short feast, for which myself will all provide.

Thus I enjoin the crew ; but as for those
Of sceptred rank, I bid them all alike

To my own board, that here we may regale
The stranger nobly, and let none refuse. 50

Call, too, Demodocus, the bard divine,
To share my banquet, whom the Gods have blest

With powers of song delectable, unmatch'd
By any, when his genius once is fired.

He ceased, and led the way, whom follow'd all 55
The sceptred senators, while to the house

An herald hasted of the bard divine.
Then, fifty mariners and two, from all

The rest selected, to the coast repair'd,
And, from her station on the sea-bank, launched 60
The galley down into the sacred Deep.

They placed the canvas and the mast on board,
Arranged the oars, unfurl'd the shining sail,

And leaving her in depth of water moor'd,
All sought the palace of Alcinoüs. 65

There soon the portico, the court, the hall
Were fill'd with multitudes of young and old,

For whose regale the mighty monarch slew
 Two beeves, twelve sheep, and twice four fatted brawns.
 They flay'd them first, then busily their task 70
 Administering, prepared the joyous feast.
 And now the herald came, leading with care
 The tuneful bard ; dear to the muse was he,
 Who yet appointed him both good and ill,
 Took from him sight, but gave him strains divine. 75
 For him Pontonoüs in the midst disposed
 An argent-studded throne, thrusting it close
 To a tall column, where he hung his lyre
 Above his head, and taught him where it hung.
 He sat before him, next, a polish'd board 80
 And basket, and a goblet fill'd with wine
 For his own use, and at his own command.
 Then, all assail'd at once the ready feast,
 And when nor hunger more nor thirst they felt,
 Then came the muse, and roused the bard to sing 85
 Exploits of men renown'd ; it was a song,
 In that day to the highest heaven extoll'd.
 He sang of a dispute kindled between
 The son of Peleus, and Laertes'¹ son,
 Both seated at a feast held to the Gods. 90
 That contest Agamemnon, King of men,
 Between the noblest of Achaia's host
 Hearing, rejoiced ; for when in Pytho erst
 He pass'd the marble threshold to consult
 The oracle of Apollo, such dispute 95
 The voice divine had to his ear announced ;
 For then it was that, first, the storm of war
 Came rolling on, ordain'd long time to afflict
 Troy and the Grecians, by the will of Jove.
 So sang the bard illustrious ; then his robe 100
 Of purple dye with both hands o'er his head
 Ulysses drew, behind its ample folds
 Veiling his face, through fear to be observed

¹ Agamemnon having inquired at Delphos at what time the war should end, was answered, that the conclusion of it should happen at a time when a dispute should arise between two of his principal commanders. That dispute occurred at the time here alluded to, Achilles recommending force as most likely to reduce the city, and Ulysses stratagem.

By the Phæacians weeping at the song ;
 And ever as the bard harmonious ceased, 105
 He wiped his tears, and, drawing from his brows
 The mantle, pour'd libation to the Gods.
 But when the Chiefs (for they delighted heard
 Those sounds,) solicited again the bard,
 And he renew'd the strain, then covering close 110
 His countenance, as before, Ulysses wept.
 Thus, unperceived by all, the Hero mourn'd,
 Save by Alcinoüs ; he alone his tears
 (Beside him seated) mark'd, and his deep sighs
 O'erhearing, the Phæacians thus bespake. 115

Phæacia's Chiefs and Senators, attend !
 We have regaled sufficient, and the harp
 Heard to satiety, companion sweet
 And seasonable of the festive hour.
 Now go we forth for honourable proof 120
 Of our address in games of every kind,
 That this our guest may to his friends report,
 At home arrived, that none like us have learn'd
 To leap, to box, to wrestle, and to run.

So saying, he led them forth, whose steps the guests 125
 All follow'd, and the herald hanging high
 The sprightly lyre, took by his hand the bard
 Demodocus, whom he the self-same way
 Conducted forth by which the Chiefs had gone
 Themselves, for that great spectacle peepared. 130
 They sought the forum ; countless swarm'd the throng
 Behind them as they went, and many a youth
 Strong and courageous to the strife arose.
 Upstood Acroneus and Ocyalus,
 Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus, after whom 135
 Anchialus with Anabeesineus
 Arose, Eretmeus, Ponteus, Proreus bold,
 Amphialus and Thöon. Then arose,
 In aspect dread as homicidal Mars,
 Euryalus, and for his graceful form 140
 (After Laodamas) distinguish'd most
 Of all Phæacia's sons, Naubolides.
 Three also from Alcinoüs sprung, arose,
 Laodamas, his eldest ; Halius, next,

His second-born ; and godlike Clytoneus. 145
 Of these, some started for the runner's prize.
²They gave the race its limits. All at once
 Along the dusty champaign swift they flew.
 But Clytoneus, illustrious youth, outstripp'd
 All competition ; far as mules surpass 150
 Slow oxen furrowing the fallow ground,
 So far before all others he arrived
 Victorious, where the throng'd spectators stood.
 Somē tried the wrestler's toil severe, in which
 Euryalus superior proved to all. 155
 In the long leap Amphialus prevail'd ;
 Elatreus most successful hurl'd the quoit,
 And at the cestus³, last, the noble son
 Of Scheria's King, Laodamas excell'd.
 When thus with contemplation of the games 160
 All had been gratified, Alcinoüs' son
 Laodamas, arising, them address'd.
 Friends ! ask we now the stranger, if he boast
 Proficiency in aught. His figure seems
 Not ill ; in thighs, and legs, and arms he shews 165
 Much strength, and in his brawny neck ; nor youth
 Hath left him yet, though batter'd he appears
 With numerous troubles, and misfortune-flaw'd.
 Nor know I hardships in the world so sure
 To break the strongest down, as those by sea. 170
 Then answer thus Euryalus return'd.
 Thou hast well said, Laodamas ; thyself
 Approaching, speak to him, and call him forth.
 Which when Alcinoüs' noble offspring heard,
 Advancing from his seat, amid them all 175
 He stood, and to Ulysses thus began.
 Stand forth, oh guest, thou also : prove thy skill
 (If any such thou boast) in games like ours,
 Which likeliest thou hast learn'd ; for greater praise

² Τοῖσι δ' ἀπο νύσσης τετατο δρομος—This expression is by the commentators generally understood to be significant of the effort which they made at starting, but it is not improbable that it relates merely to the measurement of the course, otherwise, καρπαλιμῶς ἐπιτοντο will be tautologous.

³ In boxing.

Hath no man, while he lives, than that he know 180
His feet to exercise and hands aright.
Come then ; make trial ; scatter wide thy cares ;
We will not hold thee long ; the ship is launch'd
Already, and the crew stand all prepared.

To whom replied the wily Chief renown'd. 185
Wherefore, as in derision, have ye call'd
Me forth, Laodamas, to these exploits ?
No games have I, but many a grief, at heart,
And with far other struggles worn, here sit
Desirous only of conveyance home, 190
For which both King and people I implore.

Then him Euryalus aloud reproach'd.
I well believed it, friend ! in thee the guise
I see not of a man expert in feats
Athletic, of which various are perform'd 195
In every land ; thou rather seem'st with ships
Familiar ; one accustom'd to control
Some crew of trading mariners ; well-learn'd
In stowage, pilotage, and wealth acquired
By rapine, but of no gymnastic powers. 200

To whom Ulysses, frowning dark, replied.
Thou hast ill spoken, sir, and like a man
Regardless whom he wrongs. Therefore the Gods
Give not endowments graceful in each kind,
Of body, mind, and utterance, all to one. 205
This man in figure less excels, yet Jove
Crowns him with eloquence ; his hearers charm'd
Behold him, while with modest confidence
He bears the prize of fluent speech from all,
And in the streets is gazed on as a God ! 210
Another, in his form the Powers above
Resembles, but no grace around his words
Twines itself elegant. So, thou in form
Hast excellence to boast ; a God employ'd
To make a master-piece in human shape, 215
Could but produce proportions just as thine ;
Yet hast thou an untutor'd intellect.

Thou much hast moved me ; thy unhandsome phrase
Hath roused my wrath ; I am not, as thou say'st,
A novice in these sports, but took the lead 220

In all, while youth and strength were on my side.
But I am now in bands of sorrow held,
And of misfortune, having much endured
In war, and buffeting the boisterous waves.
Yet, though with misery worn, I will essay 225
My strength among you ; for thy words had teeth
Whose bite hath pinch'd and pain'd me to the proof.

He said ; and mantled as he was, a quoit
Upstarting, seized, in bulk and weight all those
Transcending far, by the Phæacians used. 230
Swiftly he swung, and from his vigorous hand
Sent it. Loud sang the stone, and as it flew
The maritime Phæacians low inclined
Their heads beneath it ; over all the marks,
And far beyond them, sped the flying rock. 235
Minerva in a human form, the cast
Prodigious measured, and aloud exclaim'd.

Stranger ! the blind himself might with his hands
Feel out the 'vantage here. Thy quoit disdains
Fellowship with a crowd, borne far beyond. 240
Fear not a losing game ; Phæacian none
Will reach thy measure, much less overcast.

She ceased ; Ulysses, hardy Chief, rejoiced
That in the circus he had found a judge
So favourable, and with brisker tone, 245
As less in wrath, the multitude address'd.

Young men, reach this, and I will quickly heave
Another such, or yet a heavier quoit.
Then, come the man whose courage prompts him forth
To box, to wrestle with me, or to run ; 250
For ye have chafed me much, and I decline
No strife with any here, but challenge all
Phæacia, save Laodamas alone.

He is mine host. Who combats with his friend ?
To call to proof of hardiment the man 255
Who entertains him in a foreign land,
Would but evince the challenger a fool,
Who, so, should cripple his own interest there.
As for the rest, I none refuse, scorn none,
But wish for trial of you, and to match 260
In opposition fair my force with yours.

There is no game athletic in the use
Of all mankind, too difficult for me ;
I handle well the polish'd bow, and first
Amid a thousand foes strike whom I mark, 265
Although a throng of warriors at my side
Imbattled, speed their shafts at the same time.
Of all Achaia's sons who erst at Troy
Drew bow, the sole who bore the prize from me
Was Philoctetes ; I resign it else 270
To none now nourish'd with the fruits of earth.
Yet mean I no comparison of myself
With men of ancient times, with Hercules,
Or with Oechalian Eurytus, who, both,
The Gods themselves in archery he defied. 275
Soon, therefore, died huge Eurytus, ere yet
Old age he reach'd ; him, angry to be call'd
To proof of archership, Apollo slew.
But, if ye name the spear, mine flies a length
By no man's arrow reach'd ; I fear no foil 280
From the Phæacians, save in speed alone ;
For I have suffer'd hardships, dash'd and drench'd
By many a wave, nor had I food on board
At all times, therefore am I much unstrung.
He spake, and silent the Phæacians sat, 285
Of whom alone Alcinoüs thus replied.
Since, stranger, not ungraceful is thy speech,
Who hast but vindicated in our ears
Thy question'd prowess, angry that this youth
Reproach'd thee in the presence of us all, 290
That no man qualified to give his voice
In public might affront thy courage more ;
Now mark me, therefore, that in time to come,
While feasting with thy children and thy spouse,
Thou may'st inform the Heroes of thy land 295
Even of our proficiency in arts
By Jove enjoin'd us in our father's days.
We boast not much the boxer's skill, nor yet
The wrestler's ; but light-footed in the race
Are we, and navigators well inform'd. 300
Our pleasures are the feast, the harp, the dance,
Garments for change ; the tepid bath ; the bed.

Come, ye Phæacians, beyond others skill'd
 To tread the circus with harmonious steps,
 Come, play before us; that our guest, arrived 305
 In his own country, may inform his friends
 How far in seamanship we all excel,
 In running, in the dance, and in the song.
 Haste! bring ye to Demodocus his lyre
 Clear-toned, left somewhere in our hall at home. 310

So spake the godlike King, at whose command
 The herald to the palace quick return'd
 To seek the charming lyre. Meantime arose
 Nine arbiters, appointed to intend
 The whole arrangement of the public games, 315
 To smoothe the circus-floor, and give the ring
 Its compass, widening the attentive throng.
 Ere long the herald came, bearing the harp,
 With which Demodocus supplied, advanced
 Into the middle area, around whom 320
 Stood blooming youths, all skilful in the dance.
 With footsteps justly timed all smote at once
 The sacred floor; Ulysses wonder-fixt,
 The ceaseless play of twinkling⁴ feet admired.

Then tuning his sweet chords, Demodocus 325
 A jocund strain began, his theme the loves
 Of Mars and Cytherea chaplet-crown'd;
 How first, clandestine, they embraced beneath
 The roof of Vulcan; her, by many a gift
 Seduced, Mars won, and with adulterous lust 330
 The bed dishonour'd of the King of fire.
 The Sun, a witness of their amorous sport,
 Bore swift the tale to Vulcan; he, apprized
 Of that foul deed, at once his smithy sought,
 In secret darkness of his inmost soul 335
 Contriving vengeance; to the stock he heaved
 His anvil huge, on which he forged a snare
 Of bands indissoluble, by no art

⁴ The translator is indebted to Mr. Grey for an epithet more expressive of the original (*Μαρμαρυγας*) than any other, perhaps, in all our language. See the Ode on the Progress of Poetry.

"To brisk notes in cadence beating,
 Glance their *many-twinkling* feet."

To be untied, durance for ever firm.
The net prepared, he bore it, fiery-wroth, 340
To his own chamber and his nuptial couch,
Where stretching them from post to post, he wrapp'd
With those fine meshes all his bed around,
And hung them numerous from the roof, diffused
Like spiders' filaments, which not the Gods 345
Themselves could see, so subtle were the toils.
When thus he had encircled all his bed
On every side, he feign'd a journey thence
To Lemnos, of all cities that adorn
The earth, the city that he favours most. 350
Nor kept the God of the resplendent reins
Mars, drowsy watch, but seeing that the famed
Artificer of heaven had left his home,
Flew to the house of Vulcan, hot to enjoy
The Goddess with the wreath-encircled brows. 355
She, newly from her potent Sire return'd
The son of Saturn, sat. Mars, entering, seized
Her hand, hung on it, and thus urged his suit.
To bed, my fair, and let us love ! for lo !
Thine husband is from home, to Lemnos gone, 360
And to the Sintians, men of barbarous speech.
He spake, nor she was loth, but bedward too
Like him inclined ; so then to bed they went,
And as they laid them down, down stream'd the net
Around them, labour exquisite of hands 365
By ingenuity divine inform'd.
Small room they found, so prison'd ; not a limb
Could either lift, or move, but felt at once
Entanglement from which was no escape.
And now the glorious artist, ere he yet 370
Had reach'd the Lemnian isle, limping, return'd
From his feign'd journey, for his spy the Sun
Had told him all. With aching heart he sought
His home, and, standing in the vestibule,
Frantic with indignation roar'd to heaven, 375
And roar'd again, summoning all the Gods.—
Oh Jove ! and all ye powers for ever blest !
Here ! hither look, that ye may view a sight
Ludicrous, yet too monstrous to be borne,

How Venus always with dishonour loads 380
 Her cripple spouse, doting on fiery Mars!
 And wherefore? for that he is fair in form
 And sound of foot, I ricket-boned, and weak.
 Whose fault is this? Their fault, and theirs alone
 Who gave me being; ill-employ'd were they 385
 Begetting me, one better far unborn.
 See where they couch together on my bed
 Lascivious! ah, sight hateful to my eyes!
 Yet cooler wishes will they feel, I ween,
 To press my bed hereafter; here to sleep 390
 Will little please them fondly as they love.
 But these my toils and tangles will suffice
 To hold them here, till Jove shall yield me back
 Complete, the sum of all my nuptial gifts
 Paid to him for the shameless strumpet's sake 395
 His daughter, as incontinent as fair.

He said, and in the brazen-floor'd abode
 Of Jove the Gods assembled. Neptune came,
 Earth-circling Power; came Hermes friend of man,
 And regent of the far-commanding bow, 400
 Apollo also came; but chaste reserve
 Bashful kept all the Goddesses at home.
 The Gods by whose beneficence all live,
 Stood in the portal; infinite arose
 The laugh of heaven, all looking down intent 405
 On that shrewd project of the smith divine,
 And, turning to each other, thus they said.

Bad works speed ill. The slow o'ertakes the swift.
 So Vulcan, tardy as he is, by craft
 Hath outstript Mars, although the fleetest far 410
 Of all who dwell in heaven, and the light-heel'd
 Must pay the adulterer's forfeit to the lame.

So spake the Powers immortal; then the King
 Of radiant shafts thus question'd Mercury.

Jove's son, heaven's herald, Hermes, bounteous God! 415
 Would'st *thou* such stricture close of bands endure
 For golden Venus lying at thy side?

Whom answer'd thus the messenger of heaven.
 Archer divine! yea, and with all my heart;
 And be the bands which wind us round about 420

Thrice these, innumerable, and let all
The Gods and Goddesses in heaven look on,
So I may clasp Vulcan's fair spouse the while.

He spake ; then laugh'd the Immortal powers again.
But not so Neptune ; he with earnest suit 425
The glorious artist urged to the release
Of Mars, and thus in accents wing'd he said.

Loose him ; accept my promise ; he shall pay
Full recompense in presence of us all.

Then thus the limping smith far-famed replied. 430
Earth-circler Neptune, spare me that request.

'Lame suitor, lame security. What bands
Could I devise for thee among the Gods,
Should Mars, emancipated once, escape,
Leaving both death and durance far behind ? 435

Him answer'd then the Shaker of the shores.
I tell thee, Vulcan, that if Mars by flight
Shun payment, I will pay, myself, the fine.

To whom the glorious artist of the skies.
Thou must not, canst not, shalt not be refused. 440

So saying, the might of Vulcan loosed the snare,
And they, detain'd by those coercive bands
No longer, from the couch upstarting flew,
Mars into Thrace, and to her Paphian home
The Queen of smiles, where deep in myrtle groves 445
Her incense-breathing altar stands embower'd.
Her there, the Graces laved, and oils diffused
O'er all her form, ambrosial, such as add
Fresh beauty to the Gods for ever young,
And clothed her in the loveliest robes of heaven. 450

Such was the theme of the illustrious bard.
Ulysses with delight that song, and all
The maritime Phæacian concourse heard.

Alcinoüs, then, (for in the dance they pass'd
All others), call'd his sons to dance alone, 455

⁵ The original line has received such a variety of interpretations, that a Translator seems free to choose. It has, however, a proverbial turn, which I have endeavoured to preserve, and have adopted that sense of the words which appears best to accord with what immediately follows. Vulcan pleads his own inability to enforce the demand, as a circumstance that made Neptune's promise unacceptable.

Halius and Laodamas ; they gave
The purple ball into their hands, the work
Exact of Polybus ; one, re-supine,
Upcast it high toward the dusky clouds,
The other springing into air, with ease 460
Received it, ere he sank to earth again.

When thus they oft had sported with the ball
Thrown upward, next, with nimble interchange,
They pass'd it to each other many a time,
Footing the plain, while every youth of all 465
The circus clapp'd his hands, and from beneath
The din of stamping feet fill'd all the air.

Then, turning to Alcinoüs, thus the wise
Ulysses spake. Alcinoüs ! mighty King !
Illustrious above all Phæacia's sons ! 470
Incomparable are ye in the dance,
Even as thou said'st. Amazement-fixt I stand !

So he, whom hearing, the imperial might
Exulted of Alcinoüs, and aloud
To his oar-skill'd Phæacians thus he spake. 475

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, attend !
Wisdom beyond the common stint I mark
In this our guest ; good cause in my account,
For which we should present him with a pledge
Of hospitality and love. The Chiefs 480
Are twelve, who, highest in command, control
The people, and the thirteenth Chief am I.

Bring each a golden talent, with a vest
Well-bleach'd, and tunic ; gratified with these,
The stranger to our banquet shall repair 485
Exulting ; bring them all without delay ;
And let Euryalus by word and gift
Appease him, for his speech was unadvised.

He ceased, whom all applauded, and at once
Each sent his herald forth to bring the gifts, 490
When thus Euryalus his Sire address'd.

Alcinoüs ! o'er Phæacia's sons supreme !
I will appease our guest as thou command'st.
This sword shall be his own, the blade all steel,
The hilt of silver, and the unsullied sheath 495
Of ivory recent from the carver's hand.

A gift like this he shall not need despise.

So saying, his silver-studded sword he gave
Into his grasp, and courteous, thus began.

Hail, honour'd stranger ! and if word of mine
Have harm'd thee, rashly spoken, let the winds
Bear all remembrance of it swift away !

May the Gods give thee to behold again
Thy wife, and to attain thy native shore,
Whence absent long, thou hast so much endured !

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Hail also thou, and may the Gods, my friend,
Grant thee felicity, and may never want
Of this thy sword touch thee in time to come,
By whose kind phrase appeased my wrath subsides !

He ended, and athwart his shoulders threw
The weapon bright-emboss'd. Now sank the sun,
And those rich gifts arrived, which to the house
Of King Alcinoüs the heralds bore,
Alcinoüs' sons received them, and beside
Their royal mother placed the precious charge.
The King then led the way, at whose abode
Arrived, again they press'd their lofty thrones,
And to Areta thus the monarch spake.

Haste, bring a coffer ; bring thy best, and store
A mantle and a sumptuous vest within ;
Warm for him, next a brazen bath, by which
Refresh'd, and viewing in fair order placed
The noble gifts by the Phæacian Lords
Conferr'd on him, he may the more enjoy
Our banquet, and the bard's harmonious song.
I give him also this my golden cup
Splendid, elaborate ; that, while he lives,
What time he pours libation forth to Jove
And all the Gods, he may remember me.

He ended, at whose words Areta bade
Her maidens with dispatch place o'er the fire
A tripod ample-womb'd ; obedient they
Advanced a laver to the glowing hearth,
Water infused, and kindled wood beneath.
The flames encircling bright the bellied vase,
Warm'd soon the flood within. Meantime the queen

Producing from her chamber-stores a chest
All-elegant, within it placed the gold
And raiment, gifts of the Phæacian Chiefs, 540
With her own gifts, the mantle and the vest,
And in wing'd accents to Ulysses said.

Now take, thyself, the coffer's lid in charge ;
Girdle it quickly with a cord, lest loss
Befall thee on thy way, while thou perchance 545
Shalt sleep secure on board the sable bark.

Which when Ulysses heard, Hero renown'd,
Adjusting close the lid, he cast a cord
Around it, which with many a mazy knot
He tied, by Circe taught him long before. 550
And now, the mistress of the household charge
Summon'd him to his bath ; glad he beheld
The steaming vase, uncustom'd to its use
E'er since his voyage from the isle of fair
Calypso, although, while a guest with her, 555
Ever familiar with it, as a God.

Laved by attendant damsels, and with oil
Refresh'd, he put his sumptuous tunic on
And mantle, and proceeding from the bath
To the symposium, join'd the numerous guests ; 560
But, as he pass'd, the Princess all divine
Beside the pillars of the portals lost
In admiration of his graceful form,
Stood, and in accents wing'd him thus address'd.

Hail, stranger ! at thy native home arrived 565
Remember me, thy first deliverer here.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Nausicaa ! daughter of the noble King
Alcinoüs ! So may Jove, high-thundering mate
Of Juno, grant me to behold again 570
My native land, and my delightful home,
As, even there, I will present my vows
To thee, adoring thee as I adore
The Gods themselves, virgin, by whom I live !

He said, and on his throne beside the King 575
Alcinoüs sat. And now they portion'd out
The feast to all, and charged the cups with wine,
And introducing by his hand the bard

Phæacia's glory, at the column's side
The herald placed Demodocus again.

580

Then, carving forth a portion from the loins
Of a huge brawn, of which uneaten still
Large part and delicate remain'd, thus spake
Ulysses—Herald ! bear it to the bard
For his regale, whom I will soon embrace
In spite of sorrow ; for respect is due
And veneration to the sacred bard
From all mankind, for that the muse inspires
Herself his song, and loves the tuneful tribe.

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He ended, and the herald bore his charge
To the old Hero, who with joy received
That meed of honour at the bearer's hand.
Then, all, at once, assail'd the ready feast,
And hunger now and thirst both satisfied,
Thus to Demodocus Ulysses spake.

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Demodocus ! I give thee praise above
All mortals, for that either thee the muse
Jove's daughter teaches, or the King, himself,
Apollo ; since thou so record'st the fate,
With such clear method, of Achaia's host,
Their deeds heroic, and their numerous toils,
As thou hadst present been thyself, or learnt
From others present there, the glorious tale.
Come, then, proceed ; that rare invention sing,
The horse of wood, which by Minerva's aid
Epeus framed, and which Ulysses erst
Convey'd into the citadel of Troy
With warriors fill'd, who laid all Ilium waste.
These things rehearse regular, and myself
Will, instant, publish in the ears of all
Thy fame, reporting thee a bard to whom
Apollo free imparts celestial song.

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He ended ; then Apollo with full force
Rush'd on Demodocus, and he began
What time the Greeks, first firing their own camp,
Steer'd all their galleys from the shore of Troy.
Already, in the horse conceal'd, his band
Around Ulysses sat ; for Ilium's sons
Themselves had drawn it to the citadel,

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And there the mischief stood. Then, strife arose
Among the Trojans compassing the horse,
And threefold was the doubt; whether to cleave
The hollow trunk asunder, or updrawn
Aloft, to cast it headlong from the rocks,
Or to permit the enormous image, kept
Entire, to stand an offering to the Gods,
Which was their destined course; for Fate had fix'd
Their ruin sure, when once they had received
Within their walls that engine huge, in which
Sat all the bravest Grecians with the fate
Of Ilium charged, and slaughter of her sons.
He sang, how, from the horse effused, the Greeks
Left their capacious ambush, and the town
Made desolate. To others, in his song,
He gave the praise of wasting all beside,
But told how, fierce as Mars, Ulysses join'd
With godlike Menelaus, to the house
Flew of Deiphobus; him there engaged
In direst fight he sang, and through the aid
Of glorious Pallas, conqueror over all.

So sang the bard illustrious, at whose song
Ulysses melted, and tear after tear
Fell on his cheeks. As when a woman weeps
Her husband, who hath fallen in defence
Of his own city and his babes before
The gates; she, sinking, folds him in her arms,
And, gazing on him as he pants and dies,
Shrieks at the sight; meantime, the enemy
Smiting her shoulders with the spear, to toil
Command her and to bondage far away,
And her cheek fades with horror at the sound;
Ulysses, so, from his moist lids let fall
The frequent tear. Unnoticed by the rest
Those drops, but not by King Alcinoüs, felt;
Who, seated at his side, his heavy sighs
Remark'd, and the Phæacians thus spake.

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, attend!
Now let Demodocus enjoin his harp
Silence, for not alike grateful to all
His music sounds; during our feast, and since

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The bard divine began, continual flow
The stranger's sorrows, by remembrance caused
Of some great woe which wraps his soul around.
Then let the bard suspend his song, that all
(As most befits the occasion) may rejoice, 665
Both guest and hosts together ; since we make
This voyage, and these gifts confer, in proof
Of hospitality and unfeign'd love,
Judging, with all wise men, the stranger-guest
And suppliant worthy of a brother's place. 670
And thou conceal not, artfully reserved,
What I shall ask, far better plain declared
Than smother'd close ; who art thou ? speak thy name,
The name by which thy father, mother, friends
And fellow-citizens, with all who dwell 675
Around thy native city, in times past
Have known thee ; for of all things human none
Lives altogether nameless, whether good
Or whether bad, but every man receives,
Even in the moment of his birth, a name. 680
Thy country, people, city, tell ; the mark
At which my ships, intelligent, shall aim,
That they may bear thee thither ; for our ships
No pilot need or helm, as ships are wont,
But know, themselves, our purpose ; know beside 685
All cities, and all fruitful regions well
Of all the earth, and with dark clouds involved
Plough rapid the rough Deep, fearless of harm,
(Whate'er betide) and of disastrous wreck.
Yet thus, long since, my father I have heard 690
Nausithoüs speaking ; Neptune, he would say,
Is angry with us, for that safe we bear
Strangers of every nation to their home ;
And he foretold a time when he would smite
In vengeance some Phæacian gallant bark 695
Returning after convoy of her charge,
And fix her in the sable flood, transform'd
Into a mountain, right before the town.

So spake my hoary Sire, which let the God
At his own pleasure do, or leave undone. 700
But tell me truth, and plainly. Where have been

Thy wanderings ? in what regions of the earth
Hast thou arrived ? what nations hast thou seen,
What cities ? say, how many hast thou found
Harsh, savage, and unjust ? how many, kind 705
To strangers, and disposed to fear the Gods ?
Say also, from what secret grief of heart
Thy sorrows flow, oft as thou hear'st the fate
Of the Achaians, or of Ilium sung ?
That fate the Gods prepared ; they spin the thread 710
Of man's destruction, that in after-days
The bard may make the sad event his theme.
Perish'd thy father or thy brother there ?
Or hast thou at the siege of Ilium lost
Father-in-law or son-in-law ? for such 715
Are next and dearest to us after those
Who share our own descent ; or was the dead
Thy bosom-friend, whose heart was as thy own ?
For worthy as a brother of our love
The constant friend and the discreet I deem. 720

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses discovers himself to the Phæacians, and begins the history of his adventures. He destroys Ismarus, city of the Ciconians; arrives among the Lotophagi; and afterwards at the land of the Cyclops. He is imprisoned by Polypheme in his cave, who devours six of his companions; intoxicates the monster with wine, blinds him while he sleeps, and escapes from him.

THEN answer, thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
 Alcinoüs! King! illustrious above all
 Phæacia's sons! pleasant it is to hear
 A bard like this, sweet as the Gods in song.
 The world, in my account, no sight affords 5
 More gratifying, than a people blest
 With cheerfulness and peace, a palace throng'd
 With guests in order ranged, listening to sounds
 Melodious, and the steaming tables spread
 With plenteous viands, while the cups, with wine 10
 From brimming beakers fill'd, pass brisk around.
 No lovelier sight know I. But thou, it seems,
 Thy thoughts hast turn'd to ask me whence my groans
 And tears, that I may sorrow still the more.
 What first, what next, what last shall I rehearse, 15
 On whom the Gods have shower'd such various woes?
 Learn first my name, that even in this land
 Remote I may be known, and that escaped
 From all adversity, I may requite
 Hereafter this your hospitable care 20
 At my own home, however distant hence.
 I am Ulysses, fear'd in all the earth,
 For subtlest wisdom, and renown'd to heaven,
 The offspring of Laertes; my abode
 Is sun-burnt Ithaca; there waving stands 25
 The mountain Neritus his numerous boughs,

And it is neighbour'd close by clustering isles
All populous ; thence Samos is beheld,
Dulichium, and Zacynthus forest-clad.
Flat on the Deep she lies, farthest removed 30
Toward the West, while, situate apart,
Her sister islands face the rising day ;
Rugged she is, but fruitful nurse of sons
Magnanimous ; nor shall these eyes behold,
Elsewhere, an object dear and sweet as she. 35
Calypso, beauteous Goddess, in her grot
Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused ;
Ææan Circe also, skill'd profound
In potent arts, within her palace long
Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused ; 40
But never could they warp my constant mind.
So much our parents and our native soil
Attract us most, even although our lot
Be fair and plenteous in a foreign land.
But come—my painful voyage, such as Jove 45
Gave me from Ilium, I will now relate.

From Troy the winds bore me to Ismarus,
City of the Ciconians ; them I slew,
And laid their city waste ; whence bringing forth
Much spoil with all their wives, I portion'd it 50
With equal hand, and each received a share.
Next, I exhorted to immediate flight
My people ; but in vain ; they madly scorn'd
My sober counsel, and much wine they drank,
And sheep and beeves slew numerous on the shore. 55
Meantime, Ciconians to Ciconians call'd,
Their neighbours summoning, a mightier host
And braver, natives of the continent,
Expert, on horses mounted, to maintain
Fierce fight, or if occasion bade, on foot. 60
Numerous they came as leaves, or vernal flowers
At day-spring. Then by the decree of Jove,
Misfortune found us. At the ships we stood
Piercing each other with the brazen spear,
And till the morning brighten'd into noon, 65
Few as we were, we yet withstood them all ;
But when the sun verged westward, then the Greeks

Fell back, and the Ciconian host prevail'd.
Six warlike Grecians from each galley's crew
Perish'd in that dread field ; the rest escaped. 70

Thus after loss of many we pursued
Our course, yet, difficult as was our flight,
Went not till first we had invoked by name
Our friends whom the Ciconians had destroy'd.
But cloud-assembler Jove assail'd us soon 75

With a tempestuous North-wind ; earth alike
And sea with storms he overhung, and night
Fell fast from heaven. Their heads deep plunging oft
Our gallies flew, and rent, and rent again
Our tatter'd sail-cloth crackled in the wind. 80

We, fearing instant death, within the barks
Our canvas lodged, and toiling strenuous, reach'd
At length the continent. Two nights we lay
Continual there, and two long days consumed
With toil and grief ; but when the beauteous morn 85

Bright-hair'd had brought the third day to a close,
(Our masts erected, and white sails unfurl'd,)
Again we sat on board ; meantime, the winds
Well managed by the steersman, urged us on.
And now, all danger pass'd, I had attain'd 90

My native shore, but, doubling in my course
Malea, waves and currents and North-winds
Constrain'd me devious to Cythera's isle.
Nine days by cruel storms thence was I borne
Athwart the fishy Deep, but on the tenth 95

Reach'd the Lotophagi, a race sustain'd
On sweetest fruit alone. There quitting ship,
We landed and drew water, and the crews
Beside the vessels took their evening cheer.
When, hasty, we had thus our strength renew'd, 100

I order'd forth my people to inquire
(Two I selected from the rest, with whom
I join'd an herald, third), what race of men
Might there inhabit. They, departing, mix'd
With the Lotophagi ; nor hostile aught 105

Or savage the Lotophagi devised
Against our friends, but offer'd to their taste
The lotus ; of which fruit what man soe'er

Once tasted, no desire felt he to come
 With tidings back, or seek his country more, 110
 But rather wish'd to feed on lotus still
 With the Lotophagi, and to renounce
 All thoughts of home. Them, therefore, I constrain'd
 Weeping on board, and dragging each beneath
 The benches, bound him there. Then, all in haste, 115
 I urged my people to ascend again
 Their hollow barks, lest others also, fed
 With fruit of lotus, should forget their home.
 They quick embark'd, and on the benches ranged
 In order, thresh'd with oars the foamy flood. 120
 Thence, o'er the Deep proceeding sad, we reach'd
 The land at length, where,¹ giant-sized and free
 From all constraint of law, the Cyclops dwell.
 They, trusting to the Gods, plant not, or plough,
 But earth unsow'd, untill'd, brings forth for them 125
 All fruits, wheat, barley, and the vinous grape
 Large-cluster'd, nourish'd by the showers of Jove.
 No councils they convene, no laws contrive,
 But in deep caverns dwell, found on the heads
 Of lofty mountains, judging each supreme 130
 His wife and children, heedless of the rest.
 In front of the Cyclopean haven lies
 A level island, not adjoining close
 Their land, nor yet remote, woody and rude.
 There, wild-goats breed numberless, by no foot 135
 Of man 'molested; never huntsman there,
 Inured to winter's cold and hunger, roams
 The dreary woods, or mountain-tops sublime;
 No fleecy flocks dwell there, nor plough is known,
 But the unseeded and unfurrow'd soil, 140
 Year after year a wilderness by man
 Untrodden, food for blatant goats supplies.
 For no ships crimson-prow'd the Cyclops own,
 Nor naval artizan is there, whose toil
 Might furnish them with oary barks, by which 145
 Subsists all distant commerce, and which bear
 Man o'er the Deep to cities far remote
 Who might improve the peopled isle, that seems

¹ So the Scholium interprets in this place the word *ὑπερφιάλος*.

Not sterile in itself, but apt to yield,
In their due season, fruits of every kind. 150
For stretch'd beside the hoary ocean lie
Green meadows moist, where vines would never fail ;
Light is the land, and they might yearly reap
The tallest crops, so unctuous is the glebe.
Safe is its haven also, where no need 155
Of cable is or anchor, or to lash
The hawser fast ashore, but pushing in
His bark, the mariner might there abide
Till rising gales should tempt him forth again.
At bottom of the bay runs a clear stream 160
Issuing from a cove hemm'd all around
With poplars ; down into that bay we steer'd
Amid the darkness of the night, some God
Conducting us ; for all unseen it lay,
Such gloom involved the fleet, nor shone the moon 165
From heaven to light us, veil'd by pitchy clouds.
Hence, none the isle descried, nor any saw
The lofty surge roll'd on the strand, or ere
Our vessels struck the ground ; but when they struck,
Then, lowering all our sails, we disembark'd, 170
And on the sea-beach slept till dawn appear'd.
Soon as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, we with admiring eyes
The isle survey'd, roaming it wide around.
Meantime, the nymphs, Jove's daughters, roused the goats 175
Bred on the mountains, to supply with food
The partners of my toils ; then, bringing forth
Bows and long-pointed-javelins from the ships,
Divided all into three separate bands
We struck them, and the Gods gave us much prey. 180
Twelve ships attended me, and every ship
Nine goats received by lot ; myself alone
Selected ten. All day, till set of sun,
We sat eating goat's flesh, and drinking wine
Delicious without stint ; for dearth was none 185
Of ruddy wine on board, but much remain'd,
With which my people had their jars supplied
What time we sack'd Ciconian Ismarus.
Thence looking forth toward the neighbour-land

Where dwell the Cyclops, rising smoke we saw, 190
And voices heard, their own, and of their flocks.
Now sank the sun, and (night o'ershadowing all)
We slept along the shore; but when again,
The rosy-finger'd daughter of the dawn
Look'd forth, my crews convened, I thus began. 195

Companions of my course! here rest ye all,
Save my own crew, with whom I will explore
This people, whether wild they be, unjust,
And to contention given, or well-disposed
To strangers, and a race who fear the Gods. 200

So speaking, I embark'd, and bade embark
My followers, throwing, quick, the hawsers loose.
They, entering at my word, the benches fill'd
Well-ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.
Attaining soon that neighbour-land, we found 205
At its extremity, fast by the sea,
A cavern, lofty, and dark-brow'd above
With laurels; in that cavern slumbering lay
Much cattle, sheep and goats, and a broad court
Enclosed it, fenced with stones from quarries hewn, 210
With spiry firs, and oaks of ample bough.
Here dwelt a giant vast, who far remote
His flocks fed solitary, converse none
Desiring, sullen, savage, and unjust.
Monster, in truth, he was, hideous in form, 215
Resembling less a man by Ceres' gift
Sustain'd, than some aspiring mountain-crag
Tufted with wood, and standing all alone.
Enjoining, then, my people to abide
Fast by the ship which they should closely guard, 220
I went; but not without a goat-skin fill'd
With sable wine which I had erst received
From Maron, offspring of Evanthes, priest
Of Phœbus guardian god of Ismarus,
Because through reverence of him, we had saved 225
Himself, his wife and children; for he dwelt
Amid the grove umbrageous of his God.
He gave me, therefore, noble gifts; from him
Seven talents I received of beaten gold,
A beaker, argent all, and after these 230

No fewer than twelve jars with wine replete,
Rich, unadulterate, drink for Gods; nor knew.
One servant, male or female, of that wine
In all his house; none knew it, save himself,
His wife, and the intendant of his stores. 235
Oft as they drank that luscious juice, he slaked
A single cup with twenty from the stream,
And, even then, the beaker breath'd abroad
A scent celestial, which whoever smelt,
Thenceforth no pleasure found it to abstain. 240
Charged with an ample goat-skin of this wine
I went, and with a wallet well supplied,
But felt a sudden presage in my soul
That, haply, with terrific force endued,
Some savage would appear, strange to the laws 245
And privileges of the human race.
Few steps convey'd us to his den, but him
We found not; he his flocks pastured abroad.
His cavern entering, we with wonder gazed
Around on all; his strainers hung with cheese 250
Distended wide; with lambs and kids his pens
Close-throng'd we saw, and folded separate
The various charge; the eldest all apart,
Apart the middle-aged, and the new-yea'n'd
Also apart. His pails and bowls with whey 255
Swam all, neat vessels into which he milk'd.
Me then my friends first importuned to take
A portion of his cheeses, then to drive
Forth from the sheep-cotes to the rapid bark
His kids and lambs, and plough the brine again. 260
But me they moved not, happier had they moved!
I wish'd to see him, and to gain, perchance,
Some pledge of hospitality at his hands,
Whose form was such, as should not much bespeak,
When he appear'd, our confidence or love. 265
Then, kindling fire we offer'd to the Gods,
And of his cheeses eating, patient sat
Till home he trudged from pasture. Charged he came
With dry wood bundled, an enormous load,
Fuel by which to sup. Loud crash'd the thorns 270
Which down he cast before the cavern's mouth,

To whose interior nooks we trembling flew.
 At once he drove into his spacious cave
 His batten'd flock, all those which gave him milk,
 But all the males, both rams and goats, he left 275
 Abroad, excluded from the cavern-yard.
 Upheaving, next, a rocky barrier huge
 To his cave's mouth, he thrust it home. That weight
 Not all the oxen from its place had moved
 Of twenty and two wains; with such a rock 280
 Immense his den he closed. Then down he sat,
 And as he milk'd his ewes and bleating goats
 All in their turns, her yeanning gave to each;
 Coagulating, then, with brisk dispatch,
 The half of his new milk, he thrust the curd 285
 Into his wicker sieves, but stored the rest
 In pans and bowls—his customary drink.
 His labours thus perform'd, he kindled, last,
 His fuel, and discerning *us*, enquired,
 Who are ye, strangers? from what distant shore 290
 Roam ye the waters? traffic ye? or bound
 To no one port, wander, as pirates use,
 At large the Deep, exposing life themselves,
 And enemies of all mankind beside?
 He ceased; we, dash'd with terror, heard the growl 295
 Of his big voice, and view'd his form uncouth,
 To whom, though sore-appall'd, I thus replied.
 Of Greece are we, and, bound from Ilium home,
 Have wander'd wide the expanse of ocean, sport
 For every wind, and driven from our course, 300
 Have here arrived; so stood the will of Jove.
 We boast ourselves of Agamemnon's train,
 The son of Atreus, at this hour the Chief
 Beyond all others under heaven renown'd,
 So great a city he hath sack'd, and slain 305
 Such numerous foes; but since we reach, at last,
 Thy knees, we beg such hospitable fare,
 Or other gift, as guests are wont to obtain.
 Illustrious lord! respect the Gods, and us
 Thy suitors; suppliants are the care of Jove 310
 The hospitable; he their wrongs resents,
 And where the stranger sojourns, there is he.

I ceased, when answer thus he, fierce, return'd.
Friend! either thou art fool, or hast arrived
Indeed from far, who bidd'st me fear the Gods 315
Lest they be wroth. The Cyclops little heeds
Jove ægis-arm'd, or all the Powers of Heaven.
Our race is mightier far; nor shall myself,
Through fear of Jove's hostility, abstain
From thee or thine, unless my choice be such. 320
But tell me now. Where touch'd thy gallant bark
Our country, on thy first arrival here?
Remote or nigh? for I would learn the truth.
So spake he, tempting me; but, artful, thus
I answer'd, penetrating his intent. 325
My vessel, Neptune, Shaker of the shores,
At yonder utmost promontory dash'd
In pieces, hurling her against the rocks
With winds that blew right thither from the sea,
And I, with these alone, escaped alive. 330
So I, to whom, relentless, answer none
He deign'd, but, with his arms extended, sprang
Toward my people, of whom seizing two
At once, like whelps against his cavern-floor
He dash'd them, and their brains spread on the ground. 335
These, piece-meal hewn, for supper he prepared,
And, like a mountain-lion, neither flesh
Nor entrails left, nor yet their marrowy bones.
We, viewing that tremendous sight, upraised
Our hands to Jove, all hope and courage lost 340
When thus the Cyclops had with human flesh
Fill'd his capacious belly, and had quaff'd
Much undiluted milk, among his flocks
Outstretch'd immense, he press'd his cavern-floor.
Me, then, my courage prompted to approach 345
The monster with my sword drawn from the sheath,
And to transfix him where the vitals wrap
The liver; but maturer thoughts forbad.
For so, we also had incurr'd a death
Tremendous, wanting power to thrust aside 350
The rocky mass that closed his cavern-mouth
By force of hand alone. Thus many a sigh
Heaving, we watch'd the dawn. But when, at length,

Aurora, day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
Look'd forth, then kindling fire, his flocks he milk'd 355
In order, and her yeanling kid or lamb
Thrust under each. When thus he had perform'd
His wonted task, two seizing, as before,
He slew them for his next obscene regale.
His dinner ended, from the cave he drove 360
His fatted flocks abroad, moving with ease
That ponderous barrier, and replacing it
As he had only closed a quiver's lid.
Then, hissing them along, he drove his flocks
Toward the mountain, and me left, the while, 365
Deep ruminating how I best might take
Vengeance, and by the aid of Pallas win
Deathless renown. This counsel pleased me most.
Beside the sheep-cote lay a massy club
Hewn by the Cyclops from an olive stock, 370
Green, but which dried, should serve him for a staff.
To us, considering it, that staff appear'd
Tall as the mast of a huge trading-bark,
Impell'd by twenty rowers o'er the Deep.
Such seem'd its length to us, and such its bulk. 375
Part amputating, (an whole fathom's length)
I gave my men that portion, with command
To shave it smooth. They smooth'd it, and myself,
Shaping its blunt extremity to a point,
Season'd it in the fire; then covering close 380
The weapon, hid it under litter'd straw,
For much lay scatter'd on the cavern-floor.
And now I bade my people cast the lot
Who of us all should take the pointed brand,
And grind it in his eye when next he slept. 385
The lots were cast, and four were chosen, those
Whom most I wished, and I was chosen fifth.
At even-tide he came, his fleecy flocks
Pasturing homeward, and compell'd them all
Into his cavern, leaving none abroad, 390
Either through some surmise, or so inclined
By influence, haply, of the Gods themselves.
The huge rock pull'd into his place again
At the cave's mouth, he sitting, milk'd his sheep

And goats in order, and her kid or lamb
 Thrust under each ; thus, all his work dispatch'd,
 Two more he seized, and to his supper fell.
 I then approaching to him, thus address'd
 The Cyclops, holding in my hand a cup
 Of ivy-wood, well-charged with ruddy wine. 395

Lo, Cyclops ! this is wine. Take this and drink
 After thy meal of man's flesh. Taste and learn
 What precious liquor our lost vessel bore.
 I brought it hither, purposing to make
 Libation to thee, if to pity inclined 400
 Thou wouldst dismiss us home. But, ah, thy rage
 Is insupportable ! thou cruel one !
 Who, thinkest thou, of all mankind, henceforth
 Will visit *thee* guilty of such excess ?

I ceased. He took and drank, and² hugely pleased 410
 With that delicious beverage, thus enquired.

Give me again, and spare not. Tell me, too,
 Thy name, incontinent, that I may make
 Requit, gratifying also thee
 With somewhat to thy taste. We Cyclops own 415
 A bounteous soil, which yields *us* also wine
 From clusters large, nourish'd by showers from Jove ;
 But this—oh this is from above—a stream
 Of nectar and ambrosia, all divine !

He ended, and received a second draught, 420
 Like measure. Thrice I bore it to his hand,
 And, foolish, thrice he drank. But when the fumes
 Began to play around the Cyclops' brain,
 With show of amity I thus replied.

Cyclops ! thou hast my noble name enquired, 425
 Which I will tell thee. Give me, in return,
 Thy promised boon, some hospitable pledge.
 My name is Outis³ ; Outis I am call'd.

² *Αἰνως*.

³ Clarke, who has preserved this name in his marginal version, contends strenuously, and with great reason, that Outis ought not to be translated ; and in a passage which he quotes from the *Acta eruditorum*, we see much fault found with Giphanius and other interpreters of Homer for having translated it. It is certain that in Homer the word is declined not as *εἰς-τινος*, which signifies no man, but as *εἰς-τιδος*, making *εἶν*

At home, abroad, wherever I am known.

So I ; to whom he, savage, thus replied. 430
 Outis, when I have eaten all his friends,
 Shall be my last regale. Be that thy boon.

He spake, and downward sway'd, fell resupine,
 With his huge neck aslant. All-conquering sleep
 Soon seized him. From his gullet gush'd the wine 435
 With human morsels mingled, many a blast
 Sonorous issuing from his glutt'd maw.

Then thrusting far the spike of olive-wood
 Into the embers glowing on the hearth,
 I heated it, and cheer'd my friends, the while, 440
 Lest any should, through fear, shrink from his part.

But when that stake of olive-wood, though green,
 Should soon have flamed, for it was glowing hot,
 I bore it to his side. Then all my aids
 Around me gather'd, and the Gods infused 445
 Heroic fortitude into our hearts.

They, seizing the hot stake rasp'd to a point,
 Bored his eye with it, and myself, advanced
 To a superior stand, twirl'd it about.

As when a shipwright with his wimble bores 450
 Tough oaken timber, placed on either side
 Below, his fellow-artists strain the thong
 Alternate, and the restless iron spins,

So, grasping hard the stake pointed with fire,
 We twirl'd it in his eye ; the bubbling blood 455
 Boil'd round about the brand ; his pupil sent
 A scalding vapour forth that singed his brow,
 And all his eye-roots crackled in the flame.

As when the smith an hatchet or large axe
 Tempering with skill, plunges the hissing blade 460
 Deep in cold-water, (whence the strength of steel),
 So hiss'd his eye around the olive-wood.

The howling monster with his outcry fill'd
 The hollow rock, and I, with all my aids,
 Fled terrified. He, plucking forth the spike 465

in the accusative, consequently as a proper name. It is sufficient that the ambiguity was such as to deceive the friends of the Cyclops. Outis is said by some (perhaps absurdly) to have been a name given to Ulysses on account of his having larger ears than common.

From his burnt socket, mad with anguish, cast
The implement all bloody far away.
Then, bellowing, he sounded forth the name
Of every Cyclops dwelling in the caves
Around him, on the wind-swept mountain-tops ; 470
They at his cry flocking from every part,
Circled his den, and of his ail enquired.

What grievous hurt hath caused thee, Polypheme !
Thus yelling to alarm the peaceful ear
Of night, and break our slumbers ? Fear'st thou lest 475
Some mortal man drive off thy flocks ? or fear'st
Thyself to die by cunning or by force ?

Them answer'd then, Polypheme from his cave.
Oh, friends ! I die, and Outis gives the blow.

To whom with accents wing'd his friends without. 480
If no man⁴ harm thee, but thou art alone,
And sickness feel'st, it is the stroke of Jove,
And thou must bear it ; yet invoke for aid
Thy father Neptune, Sovereign of the floods.

So saying, they went, and in my heart I laugh'd 485
That by the fiction only of a name,
Slight stratagem ! I had deceived them all.

Then groan'd the Cyclops wrung with pain and grief,
And, fumbling with stretch'd hands, removed the rock
From his cave's mouth, which done, he sat him down 490
Spreading his arms athwart the pass, to stop
Our egress with his flocks abroad ; so dull,
It seems, he held me, and so ill-advised.

I, pondering what means might fittest prove
To save from instant death (if save I might) 495
My people and myself, to every shift

Inclined, and various counsels framed, as one
Who strove for life, conscious of woe at hand.
To me, thus meditating, this appear'd
The likeliest course. The rams well-thriven were 500
Thick-fleeced, full-sized, with wool of sable hue.
These, silently, with osier twigs on which

⁴ Outis, as a *name*, could only denote him who bore it ; but as a *noun*, it signifies *no man*, which accounts sufficiently for the ludicrous mistake of his brethren.

The Cyclops, hideous monster, slept, I bound,
Three in one leash ; the intermediate rams
Bore each a man, whom the exterior two 505
Preserved, concealing him on either side.
Thus each was borne by three, and I, at last,
The curl'd back seizing of a ram, (for one
I had reserved far stateliest of them all)
Slipp'd underneath his belly, and both hands 510
Enfolding fast in his exuberant fleece,
Clung ceaseless to him as I lay supine.
We, thus disposed, waited with many a sigh
The sacred dawn ; but when, at length, arisen,
Aurora, day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd, 515
Again appear'd, the males of all his flocks
Rush'd forth to pasture, and his ewes the while
Stood bleating, unrelieved from the distress
Of udders overcharged. Their master, rack'd
With pain intolerable, handled yet 520
The backs of all, inquisitive, as they stood,
But, gross of intellect, suspicion none
Conceived of men beneath their bodies bound.
And now (none left beside) the ram approach'd
With his own wool burthen'd, and with myself, 525
Whom many a fear molested. Polypheme
The giant strok'd him as he sat, and said,
My darling ram ! why, latest of the flock
Comest thou, whom never, heretofore, my sheep
Could leave behind, but stalking at their head, 530
Thou first was wont to crop the tender grass,
First to arrive at the clear stream, and first
With ready will to seek my sheep-cote here
At evening ; but, thy practice changed, thou comest
Now last of all. Feel'st thou regret, my ram ! 535
Of thy poor master's eye, by a vile wretch
Bored out, who overcame me first with wine,
And by a crew of vagabonds accursed,
Followers of Outis, whose escape from death
Shall not be made to-day ? Ah ! that thy heart 540
Were as my own, and that distinct as I
Thou couldst articulate, so shouldst thou tell,

Where hidden, he eludes my furious wrath.
 Then dash'd against the floor his spatter'd brain
 Should fly, and I should lighter feel my harm 545
 From Outis, wretch base-named and nothing-worth.

So saying, he left him to pursue the flock.
 When thus drawn forth, we had, at length, escaped
 Few paces from the cavern and the court,
 First, quitting my own ram, I loosed my friends, 550
 Then, turning seaward many a thriven ewe
 Sharp-hoof'd, we drove them swiftly to the ship.
 Thrice welcome to our faithful friends we came
 From death escaped, but much they mourn'd the dead.
 I suffer'd not their tears, but silent shook 555
 My brows, by signs commanding them to lift
 The sheep on board, and instant plough the main.
 They, quick embarking, on the benches sat
 Well ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood ;
 But distant now such length as a loud voice 560
 May reach, I hail'd with taunts the Cyclops' ear.

Cyclops ! when thou devouredst in thy cave
 With brutal force my followers, thou devour'dst
 The followers of no timid Chief, or base.
 Vengeance was sure to recompense that deed 565
 Atrocious. Monster ! who wast not afraid
 To eat the guest shelter'd beneath thy roof !
 Therefore the Gods have well requited thee.

I ended ; he, exasperate, raged the more,
 And rending from its hold a mountain-top, 570
 Hurl'd it toward us ; at our vessel's stern
 Down came the mass, nigh sweeping in its fall
 The rudder's head. The ocean, at the plunge
 Of that huge rock, high on his reflux flood
 Heaved, irresistible, the ship to land. 575

I seizing, quick, our longest pole on board,
 Back thrust her from the coast, and by a nod
 In silence given, bid my companions ply
 Strenuous their oars, that so we might escape.
⁵Procumbent, each obey'd, and when, the flood 580

⁵ προπεσοντες.

Procumbunt. Olli certamine summo
 VIRGIL.

Cleaving⁶, we twice that distance had obtain'd,
 Again I hail'd the Cyclops ; but my friends
 Earnest dissuaded me on every side.

Ah, rash Ulysses ! why with taunts provoke
 The savage more, who hath this moment hurl'd 585
 A weapon, such as heaved the ship again
 To land, where death seem'd certain to us all ?
 For had he heard a cry, or but the voice
 Of one man speaking, he had all our heads
 With some sharp rock, and all our timbers crush'd 590
 Together, such vast force is in his arm.

So they, but my courageous heart remain'd
 Unmoved, and thus again, incensed, I spake.

Cyclops ! should any mortal man inquire
 To whom thy shameful loss of sight thou owest, 595
 Say, to Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
 Laertes' son, native of Ithaca.

I ceased, and with a groan thus he replied.

Ah me ! an ancient oracle I feel
 Accomplish'd. Here abode a prophet erst, 600
 A man of noblest form, and in his art
 Unrivall'd, Telemus Eurymedes.

He, prophesying to the Cyclops-race,
 Grew old among us, and presaged my loss
 Of sight, in future, by Ulysses' hand. 605

I therefore watch'd for the arrival here,
 Always, of some great Chief, for stature, bulk,
 And beauty praised, and clothed with wonderous might.
 But now—a dwarf, a thing impalpable,
 A shadow, overcame me first by wine, 610

Then quench'd my sight. Come hither, O my guest !
 Return, Ulysses ! hospitable cheer
 Awaits thee, and my prayers I will prefer
 To glorious Neptune for thy prosperous course ;
 For I am Neptune's offspring, and the God 615
 Is proud to be my Sire ; he, if he please,
 And he alone can heal me ; none beside
 Of Powers Immortal, or of men below.

⁶ The seeming incongruity of this line with line 560, is reconciled by supposing that Ulysses exerted his voice, naturally loud, in an extraordinary manner on this second occasion. See Clarke.

He spake, to whom I answer thus return'd.
I would that of my life and soul amerced,
I could as sure dismiss thee down to Hell,
As none shall heal thy eye—not even He.

So I ; then pray'd the Cyclops to his Sire
With hands upraised toward the starry heaven.

Hear, Earth-encircler Neptune, azure-hair'd !
If I indeed am thine, and if thou boast
Thyself my father, grant that never more
Ulysses, leveller of hostile towers,
Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair,
Behold his native home ! but if his fate
Decree him yet to see his friends, his house,
His native country, let him deep-distress'd
Return and late, all his companions lost,
Indebted for a ship to foreign aid,
And let affliction meet him at his door.

He spake, and Ocean's sovereign heard his prayer.
Then lifting from the shore a stone of size
Far more enormous, o'er his head he whirl'd
The rock, and his immeasurable force
Exerting all, dismiss'd it. Close behind
The ship, nor distant from the rudder's head,
Down came the mass. The ocean at the plunge
Of such a weight, high on its reflux flood
Tumultuous, heaved the bark well-nigh to land.

But when we reach'd the isle where we had left
Our numerous barks, and where my people sat
Watching with ceaseless sorrow our return,
We thrust our vessel to the sandy shore,
Then disembark'd, and of the Cyclops' sheep
Gave equal share to all. To me alone
My fellow-voyagers the ram consign'd
In distribution, my peculiar meed.

Him, therefore, to cloud-girt Saturnian Jove
I offer'd on the shore, burning his thighs
In sacrifice ; but Jove my hallow'd rites
Reck'd not, destruction purposing to all
My barks, and all my followers o'er the Deep.
Thus, feasting largely, on the shore we sat

Till even-tide, and quaffing generous wine ;
But when day fail'd, and night o'ersadow'd all, 660
Then on the shore we slept ; and when again
Aurora, rosy daughter of the Dawn,
Look'd forth, my people, anxious, I enjoin'd
To climb their barks, and cast the hawsers loose.
They, all obedient, took their seats on board 665
Well-ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.
Thus, 'scaping narrowly, we roam'd the Deep
With aching hearts, and with diminish'd crews.

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, in pursuit of his narrative, relates his arrival at the island of Æolus, his departure thence, and the unhappy occasion of his return thither. The monarch of the winds dismisses him at last with much asperity. He next tells of his arrival among the Læstrygonians, by whom his whole fleet, together with their crews, are destroyed, his own ship and crew excepted. Thence he is driven to the island of Circe. By her the half of his people are transformed into swine. Assisted by Mercury, he resists her enchantments himself, and prevails with the Goddess to recover them to their former shape. In consequence of Circe's instructions, after having spent a complete year in her palace, he prepares for a voyage to the infernal regions.

We came to the Æolian isle ; there dwells
 Æolus, son of Hippotas, beloved
 By the Immortals, in an isle afloat.
 A brazen wall impregnable on all sides
 Girds it, and smooth its rocky coast ascends. 5
 His children in his own fair palace born,
 Are twelve ; six daughters, and six blooming sons.
 He gave his daughters to his sons to wife ;
 They with their father hold perpetual feast
 And with their royal mother, still supplied 10
 With dainties numberless ; the sounding dome
 Is fill'd with savoury odours all the day,
 And with their consorts chaste at night they sleep
 On stateliest couches with rich arras spread.
 Their city and their splendid courts we reach'd. 15
 A month complete he, friendly, at his board
 Regaled me, and enquiry made minute
 Of Ilium's fall, of the Achaian fleet,
 And of our voyage thence. I told him all.
 But now, desirous to embark again, 20
 I ask'd dismissal home, which he approved,

And well provided for my prosperous course.
 He gave me, furnished by a bullock flay'd
 In his ninth year, a bag ; every rude blast
 Which from its bottom turns the Deep, that bag 25
 Imprison'd held ; for him Saturnian Jove
 Hath officed arbiter of all the winds,
 To rouse their force, or calm them, at his will.
 He gave me them on board my bark, so bound
 With silver twine that not a breath escaped, 30
 Then order'd gentle Zephyrus to fill
 Our sails propitious. Order vain, alas !
 So fatal proved the folly of my friends.

Nine days continual, night and day we sail'd,
 And on the tenth my native land appear'd. 35
 Not far remote my Ithacans I saw
 Fires kindling on the coast ; but me with toil
 Worn, and with watching, gentle sleep subdued ;
 For constant I had ruled the helm, nor given
 That charge to any, fearful of delay. 40
 Then, in close conference combined, my crew
 Each other thus bespake—He carries home
 Silver and gold from Æolus received,
 Offspring of Hippotas, illustrious Chief ;
 And thus a mariner the rest harangued. 45

Ye Gods ! what city or what land soe'er
 Ulysses visits, how he is beloved
 By all, and honour'd ! many precious spoils
 He homeward bears from Troy ; but we return,
 (We who the self-same voyage have perform'd,) 50
 With empty hands. Now also he hath gain'd
 This pledge of friendship from the Kings of winds.
 But come—be quick—search we the bag and learn
 What stores of gold and silver it contains.

So he, whose mischievous advice prevail'd. 55
 They loosed the bag ; forth issued all the winds,
 And caught by tempests o'er the billowy waste,
 Weeping they flew, far, far from Ithaca.
 I then, awaking, in my noble mind
 Stood doubtful, whether from my vessel's side 60
 Immersed to perish in the flood, or calm
 To endure my sorrows, and consent to live.

I calm endured them ; but around my head
Winding my mantle, laid me down below,
While adverse blasts bore all my fleet again 65
To the Æolian isle ; then groan'd my people.

We disembark'd and drew fresh water there,
And my companions, at their galley's sides
All seated took repast ; short meal we made,
When with an herald and a chosen friend 70
I sought once more the hall of Æolus.

Him banquetting with all his sons we found,
And with his spouse ; we, entering, on the floor
Of his wide portal sat, whom they amazed
Beheld, and of our coming thus enquired. 75

Return'd ? Ulysses ! by what adverse Power
Repulsed hast thou arrived ? we sent thee hence
Well-fitted forth to reach thy native isle,
Thy palace, or what place soe'er thou would'st.

So they—to whom, heart-broken, I replied, 80
My worthless crew have wrong'd me, nor alone
My worthless crew, but sleep ill-timed, as much.
Yet heal, O friends, my hurt ; the power is yours !

So I their favour woo'd. Mute sat the sons,
But thus their father answer'd. Hence—begone— 85
Leave this our isle, thou most obnoxious wretch
Of all mankind. I should, myself, transgress,
Receiving here, and giving conduct hence
To one detested by the Gods as thou.
Away—for hated by the Gods thou comest. 90

So saying, he sent me from his palace forth,
Groaning profound ; thence, therefore, o'er the Deep
We still proceeded sorrowful, our force
Exhausting ceaseless at the toilsome oar,
And through our own imprudence, hopeless now 95
Of other furtherance to our native isle.

Six days we navigated, day and night,
The briny flood, and on the seventh reach'd
The city erst by Lamus built sublime,
Proud Læstrigonia, with the distant gates. 100

¹ The herdsman, there, driving his cattle home,

¹ It is supposed by Eustathius that the pastures being infested by gadflies and other noxious insects in the day-time, they drove their sheep

Summons the shepherd with his flocks abroad.
 The sleepless there might double wages earn,
 Attending, now, the herds, now tending sheep,
 For the night-pastures, and the pastures grazed 105
 By day, close border, both, the city-walls.
 To that illustrious port we came, by rocks
 Uninterrupted flank'd on either side
 Of towering height, while prominent the shores
 And bold, converging at the haven's mouth 110
 Leave narrow pass. We push'd our galleys in,
 Then moor'd them side by side ; for never surge
 There lifts its head, or great or small, but clear
 We found, and motionless, the shelter'd flood.
 Myself alone, staying my bark without, 115
 Secured her well with hawsers to a rock
 At the land's point, then climb'd the rugged steep,
 And spying stood the country. Labours none
 Of men or oxen in the land appear'd,
 Nor aught beside saw we, but from the earth 120
 Smoke rising ; therefore of my friends I sent
 Before me two, adding an herald third,
 To learn what race of men that country fed.
 Departing, they an even track pursued
 Made by the waggons bringing timber down 125
 From the high mountains to the town below.
 Before the town a virgin bearing forth
 Her ewer they met, daughter of him who ruled
 The Læstrygonian race, Antiphatas.
 Descending from the gate she sought the fount 130
 Artacia ; for their custom was to draw
 From that pure fountain for the city's use.
 Approaching they accosted her, and ask'd
 What king reigned there, and over whom he reign'd.
 She gave them soon to know where stood sublime 135
 The palace of her Sire ; no sooner they
 The palace enter'd, than within they found,
 In size resembling an huge mountain-top,

a-field in the morning, which by their wool were defended from them,
 and their cattle in the evening, when the insects had withdrawn. It is
 one of the few passages in Homer that must lie at the mercy of con-
 jecture.

A woman, whom they shudder'd to behold.
 She forth from council summon'd quick her spouse 140
 Antiphatas, who teeming came with thoughts
 Of carnage, and arriving seized at once
 A Grecian, whom, next moment, he devoured.
 With headlong terror the surviving two
 Fled to the ships. Then sent Antiphatas 145
 His voice through all the town, and on all sides,
 Hearing that cry, the Læstrygonians flock'd
 Numberless, and in size resembling more
 The giants than mankind. They from the rocks
 Cast down into our fleet enormous stones, 150
 A strong man's burden each; dire din arose
 Of shatter'd galleys and of dying men,
 Whom spear'd like fishes to their home they bore,
 A loathsome prey. While them within the port
 They slaughter'd, I (the faulchion at my side 155
 Drawn forth) cut loose the hawser of my ship,
 And all my crew enjoin'd, with bosoms laid,
 Prone on their oars, to fly the threaten'd woe.
 They, dreading instant death, tugg'd resupine
 Together, and the galley from beneath 160
 Those ²beetling rocks into the open sea
 Shot gladly; but the rest all perish'd there.
 Proceeding thence, we sigh'd, and roam'd the waves,
 Glad that we lived, but sorrowing for the slain.
 We came to the Ææan isle; there dwelt 165
 The awful Circe, Goddess amber-hair'd,
 Deep skill'd in magic song, sister by birth
 Of the all-wise Æætēs; them the Sun,
 Bright luminary of the world, begat
 On Perse, daughter of Oceanus. 170
 Our vessel there, noiseless, we push'd to land
 Within a spacious haven, thither led
 By some celestial Power. We disembark'd,
 And on the coast two days and nights entire
 Extended lay, worn with long toil, and each 175
 The victim of his heart-devouring woes.
 Then with my spear, and with my faulchion arm'd,
 I left the ship to climb with hasty steps

² The word has the authority of Shakespeare, and signifies overhanging.

An airy height, thence hoping to espy
Some works of man, or hear, perchance, a voice. 180
Exalted on a rough rock's craggy point
I stood, and on the distant plain, beheld
Smoke which from Circe's palace through the gloom
Of trees and thickets rose. That smoke discern'd,
I ponder'd next if thither I should haste, 185
Seeking intelligence. Long time I mused,
But chose at last, as my discreeter course,
To seek the sea-beach and my bark again,
And, when my crew had eaten, to dispatch
Before me others, who should first enquire. 190
But, ere I yet had reach'd my gallant bark,
Some God with pity viewing me alone
In that untrodden solitude, sent forth
An antler'd stag full-sized into my path.
His woodland pastures left, he sought the stream, 195
For he was thirsty, and already parch'd
By the sun's heat. Him issuing from his haunt,
Sheer through the back, beneath his middle spine,
I wounded, and the lance sprang forth beyond.
Moaning he fell, and in the dust expired. 200
Then treading on his breathless trunk, I pluck'd
My weapon forth, which leaving there reclined,
I tore away the osiers with my hands
And sallows green, and to a fathom's length
Twisting the gather'd twigs into a band, 205
Bound fast the feet of my enormous prey,
And, slinging him athwart my neck, repair'd
Toward my sable bark, propp'd on my lance,
Which now to carry shoulder'd as before
Surpass'd my power, so bulky was the load. 210
Arriving at the ship, there I let fall
My burthen, and with pleasant speech and kind,
Man after man addressing, cheer'd my crew.
My friends! we suffer much, but shall not seek
The shades, ere yet our destined hour arrive. 215
Behold a feast! and we have wine on board;—
Pine not with needless famine; rise and eat.
I spake; they readily obey'd, and each
Issuing at my word abroad, beside

The galley stood, admiring, as he lay,
The stag, for of no common bulk was he. 220

At length, their eyes gratified to the full
With that glad spectacle, they laved their hands,
And preparation made of noble cheer.
That day complete, till set of sun, we spent 225
Feasting deliciously without restraint,

And quaffing generous wine : but when the sun
Went down, and darkness overshadow'd all,
Extended then on Ocean's bank we lay ;
And when Aurora, daughter of the dawn, 230
Look'd rosy forth, convening all my crew
To council, I arose, and thus began.

My fellow-voyagers, however worn
With numerous hardships, hear ! for neither West
Know we, nor East, where rises, or where sets 235
The all-enlight'ning sun. But let us think,
If thought perchance may profit us, of which
Small hope I see ; for when I lately climb'd
Yon craggy rock, plainly I could discern
The land encompass'd by the boundless Deep. 240
The isle is flat, and in the midst I saw
Dun smoke ascending from an oaken bower.

So I, whom hearing, they all courage lost,
And at remembrance of Antiphatas
The Læstrygonian, and the Cyclops' deeds, 245
Ferocious feeder on the flesh of man,
Mourn'd loud and wept, but tears could nought avail.

Then, numbering man by man, I parted them
In equal portions, and assign'd a Chief
To either band, myself to these, to those 250
Godlike Eurylochus. This done, we cast

The lots into the helmet, and at once
Forth sprang the lot of bold Eurylochus.
He went, and with him of my people march'd
Twenty and two, all weeping ; nor ourselves 255
Wept less, at separation from our friends.

Low in a vale, but on an open spot,
They found the splendid house of Circe, built
With hewn and polish'd stones ; compass'd she dwelt
By lions on all sides and mountain-wolves 260

Tamed by herself with drugs of noxious powers.
Nor were they mischievous, but as my friends
Approach'd, arising on their hinder feet,
Paw'd them in blandishment, and wagg'd the tail.
As, when from feast he rises, dogs around 265
Their master fawn, accustom'd to receive
The sop conciliatory from his hand,
Around my people, so, those talon'd wolves
And lions fawn'd. They, terrified, that troop
Of savage monsters horrible beheld. 270
And now before the Goddess' gates arrived,
They heard the voice of Circe singing sweet
Within, while, busied at the loom, she wove
An ample web immortal, such a work
Transparent, graceful, and of bright design 275
As hands of Goddesses alone produce.
Thus then Polites, Prince of men, the friend
Highest in my esteem, the rest bespake.
Ye hear the voice, comrades, of one who weaves
An ample web within, and at her task 280
So sweetly chaunts that all the marble floor
Re-echoes ; human be she or divine
I doubt, but let us call, that we may learn.
He ceased ; they call'd ; soon issuing at the sound,
The Goddess open'd wide her splendid gates, 285
And bade them in ; they, heedless, all complied,
All save Eurylochus, who fear'd a snare.
She, introducing them, conducted each
To a bright throne, then gave them Pramnian wine,
With grated cheese, pure meal, and honey new, 290
But medicated with her poisonous drugs
Their food, that in oblivion they might lose
The wish of home. She gave them, and they drank,—
When smiting each with her enchanting wand,
She shut them in her sties. In head, in voice, 295
In body, and in bristles they became
All swine, yet intellected as before,
And at her hand were dieted alone
With acorns, chestnuts, and the cornel-fruit,
Food grateful ever to the grovelling swine. 300
Back flew Eurylochus toward the ship,

To tell the woful tale ; struggling to speak
Yet speechless, there he stood, his heart transfixt
With anguish, and his eyes deluged with tears.
Me boding terrors occupied. At length, 305
When, gazing on him, all had oft inquired,
He thus rehearsed to us the dreadful change.

Renown'd Ulysses ! as thou badest, we went
Through yonder oaks ; there, bosom'd in a vale,
But built conspicuous on a swelling knoll 310
With polish'd rock, we found a stately dome.
Within, some Goddess or some woman wove
An ample web, carolling sweet the while.
They call'd aloud ; she, issuing at the voice,
Unfolded, soon, her splendid portals wide, 315
And bade them in. Heedless they enter'd, all,
But I remain'd, suspicious of a snare.
Ere long the whole band vanish'd, none I saw
Thenceforth, though, seated there, long time I watch'd.

He ended ; I my studded faulchion huge 320
Athwart my shoulder cast, and seized my bow,
Then bade him lead me thither by the way
Himself had gone ; but with both hands my knees
He clasp'd, and in wing'd accents sad exclaim'd.

My King ! ah lead me not unwilling back, 325
But leave me here ; for confident I judge
That neither thou wilt bring another thence,
Nor come thyself again. Haste—fly we swift
With these, for we, at least, may yet escape.

So he, to whom this answer I return'd. 330
Eurylochos ! abiding here, eat thou
And drink thy fill beside the sable bark ;
I go ; necessity forbids my stay.

So saying, I left the galley and the shore.
But ere that awful vale entering, I reach'd 335
The palace of the sorceress, a God
Met me, the bearer of the golden wand,
Hermes. He seem'd a stripling in his prime,
His cheeks clothed only with their earliest down,
For youth is then most graceful ; fast he lock'd 340
His hand in mine, and thus, familiar, spake.

Unhappy ! whither, wandering o'er the hills,

Stranger to all this region, and alone,
Goest thou? Thy people—they within the walls
Are shut of Circe, where as swine close-pent 345
She keeps them. Comest thou to set them free?
I tell thee, never wilt thou thence return
Thyself, but wilt be prison'd with the rest.
Yet hearken—I will disappoint her wiles,
And will preserve thee. Take this precious drug; 350
Possessing this, enter the Goddess' house
Boldly, for it shall save thy life from harm.
Lo! I reveal to thee the cruel arts
Of Circe; learn them. She will mix for thee
A potion, and will also drug thy food 355
With noxious herbs; but she shall not prevail
By all her power to change thee; for the force
Superior of this noble plant, my gift,
Shall baffle her. Hear still what I advise.
When she shall smite thee with her slender rod, 360
With faulchion drawn and with death-threatening looks
Rush on her; she will bid thee to her bed
Affrighted; then beware. Decline not thou
Her love, that she may both release thy friends,
And may with kindness entertain thyself. 365
But force her swear the dreaded oath of Heaven
That she will other mischief none devise
Against thee, lest she strip thee of thy might,
And quenching all thy virtue, make thee vile.
So spake the Argicide, and from the earth 370
That plant extracting, placed it in my hand,
Then taught me all its powers. Black was the root,
Milk-white the blossom; Moly is its name
In heaven; not easily by mortal man
Dug forth, but all is easy to the Gods. 375
Then Hermes through the island-woods repair'd
To heaven, and I to Circe's dread abode,
In gloomy musings busied as I went.
Within the vestibule arrived, where dwelt
The beauteous Goddess, staying there my steps 380
I call'd aloud; she heard me, and at once
Issuing, threw her splendid portals wide,
And bade me in. I follow'd, heart-distress'd.

Leading me by the hand to a bright throne
With ardent studs embellish'd, and beneath
Foot-stool'd magnificent, she made me sit.
Then mingling for me in a golden cup
My beverage, she infused a drug, intent
On mischief; but when I had drunk the draught
Unchanged, she smote me with her wand, and said. 390

Hence—seek the sty. There wallow with thy friends.
She spake; I drawing from beside my thigh
My faulchion keen, with death-denouncing looks
Rush'd on her; she with a shrill scream of fear
Ran under my raised arm, seized fast my knees,
And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began. 395

Who? whence? thy city and thy birth declare.
Amazed I see thee with that potion drench'd,
Yet unenchanted; never man before
Once pass'd it through his lips, and lived the same;
But in thy breast a mind inhabits, proof
Against all charms. Come then—I know thee well.
Thou art Ulysses artifice-renown'd,
Of whose arrival here in his return
From Ilium, Hermes of the golden wand
Was ever wont to tell me. Sheath again
Thy sword, and let us on my bed reclined,
Mutual embrace, that we may trust thenceforth
Each other, without jealousy or fear. 405

The Goddess spake, to whom I thus replied. 410
O Circe! canst thou bid me meek become
And gentle, who beneath thy roof detain'st
My fellow-voyagers transform'd to swine?
And fearing my escape, invitest thou me
Into thy bed, with fraudulent pretext
Of love, that there enfeebling by thy arts
My noble spirit, thou may'st make me vile?
No—trust me—never will I share thy bed
Till first, oh Goddess, thou consent to swear
That dread all-binding oath, that other harm
Against myself thou wilt imagine none. 415 420

I spake. She swearing as I bade, renounced
All evil purpose, and (her solemn oath
Concluded,) I ascended next her bed

Magnificent. Meantime, four graceful nymphs 425
 Attended on the service of the house,
 Her menials, from the fountains sprung and groves,
 And from the sacred streams that seek the sea.
 Of these, one cast fine linen on the thrones,
 Which, next, with purple arras rich she spread ; 430
 Another placed before the gorgeous seats
 Bright tables, and set on baskets of gold.
 The third, an argent beaker filled with wine
 Delicious, which in golden cups she served ;
 The fourth brought water, which she warm'd within 435
 An ample vase, and when the simmering flood
 Sang in the tripod, led me to a bath,
 And laved me with the pleasant stream profuse
 Pour'd o'er my neck and body, till my limbs,
 Refresh'd, all sense of lassitude resign'd. 440
 When she had bathed me, and with limpid oil
 Anointed me, and clothed me in a vest
 And mantle, next she led me to a throne
 Of royal state, with silver studs emboss'd,
 And footstool'd soft beneath ; then came a nymph 445
 With golden ewer charged and silver bowl,
 Who pour'd pure water on my hands, and placed
 The polish'd board before me, which with food
 Various, selected from her present stores,
 The cateress spread, then, courteous, bade me eat. 450
 But me it pleas'd not ; with far other thoughts
 My spirit teem'd, on vengeance more intent.
 Soon, then, as Circe mark'd me on my seat
 Fast-rooted, sullen, nor with outstretch'd hands
 Deigning to touch the banquet, she approach'd, 455
 And in wing'd accents suasive thus began.

Why sits Ulysses like the Dumb, dark thoughts
 His only food ? loathes he the touch of meat,
 And taste of wine ? Thou fear'st, as I perceive,
 Some other snare, but idle is that fear, 460
 For I have sworn the inviolable oath.

She ceased, to whom this answer I return'd.
 How can I eat ? what virtuous man and just,
 O Circe ! could endure the taste of wine
 Or food, till he should see his prison'd friends 465

Once more at liberty? If then thy wish
That I should eat and drink be true, produce
My captive people; let us meet again.

So I; then Circe, bearing in her hand
Her potent rod, went forth, and opening wide 470
The door, drove out my people from the sty,
In bulk resembling brawns of the ninth year.
They stood before me; she through all the herd
Proceeding, with an unctuous antidote

Anointed each, and at the wholesome touch 475
All shed the swinish bristles by the drug,
Dread Circe's former magic gift, produced.

Restored at once to manhood, they appear'd
More vigorous far, and sightlier than before. 480
They knew me, and with grasp affectionate
Hung on my hand. Tears follow'd, but of joy,
And with loud cries the vaulted palace rang.
Even the awful Goddess felt, herself,

Compassion, and, approaching me, began. 485
Læertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!

Hence to the shore, and to thy gallant bark;
First, hale her safe aground, then, hiding all
Your arms and treasures in the caverns, come
Thyself again, and hither lead thy friends.

So spake the Goddess, and my generous mind 490
Persuaded; thence repairing to the beach,
I sought my ship; arrived, I found my crew
Lamenting miserably, and their cheeks
With tears bedewing ceaseless at her side.

As when the calves within some village rear'd 495
Behold, at eve, the herd returning home

From fruitful meads where they have grazed their fill,
No longer in the stalls contain'd, they rush
With many a frisk abroad, and, blaring oft,
With one consent all dance their dams around; 500

So they, at sight of me, dissolved in tears
Of rapturous joy, and each his spirit felt
With like affections warm'd as he had reach'd
Just then his country, and his city seen,
Fair Ithaca, where he was born and rear'd. 505
Then in wing'd accents tender thus they spake.

Noble Ulysses ! thy appearance fills
Our soul with transports, such as we should feel
Arrived in safety on our native shore.

Speak—say how perish'd our unhappy friends ?

510

So they ; to whom this answer mild I gave.

Hale we our vessel first ashore, and hide
In caverns all our treasures and our arms,
Then, hasting hence, follow me, and ere long
Ye shall behold your friends, beneath the roof
Of Circe banquetting and drinking wine
Abundant, for no dearth attends them there.

515

So I ; whom all with readiness obey'd,

All save Eurylochus ; he sought alone

To stay the rest, and, eager, interposed.

520

Ah, whither tend we, miserable men ?

Why covet ye this evil, to go down

To Circe's palace ? she will change us all

To lions, wolves, or swine, that we may guard

Her palace, by necessity constrain'd.

525

So some were prisoners of the Cyclops erst,

When, led by rash Ulysses, our lost friends

Intruded needlessly into his cave,

And perish'd by the folly of their Chief.

He spake, whom hearing, occupied I stood

530

In self-debate, whether, my fault-finder keen

Forth-drawing from beside my sturdy thigh,

To tumble his lopp'd head into the dust,

Although he were my kinsman in the bonds

Of close affinity ; but all my friends,

535

As with one voice, thus gently interposed.

Noble Ulysses ! we will leave him here

Our vessel's guard, if such be thy command,

But us lead thou to Circe's dread abode.

So saying, they left the galley, and set forth

540

Climbing the coast ; nor would Eurylochus

Beside the hollow bark remain, but join'd

His comrades, by my dreadful menace awed.

Meantime the Goddess, busily employ'd,

Bathed and refresh'd my friends with limpid oil,

545

And clothed them. We, arriving, found them all

Banquetting in the palace ; there they met ;

These ask'd and those rehearsed the wondrous tale,
And the recital made, all wept aloud
Till the wide dome resounded. Then approach'd 550
The graceful Goddess, and addressed me thus.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
Provoke ye not each other, now, to tears.
I am not ignorant, myself, how dread
Have been your woes, both on the fishy Deep, 555
And on the land by force of hostile powers.
But come—Eat now, and drink ye wine, that so
Your freshen'd spirit may revive, and ye
Courageous grow again, as when ye left
The rugged shores of Ithaca, your home. 560
For now, through recollection, day by day,
Of all your pains and toils, ye are become
Spiritless, strengthless, and the taste forget
Of pleasure, such have been your numerous woes.

She spake, whose invitation kind prevail'd, 565
And won us to her will. There then we dwelt
The year complete, fed with delicious fare
Day after day, and quaffing generous wine.
But when (the year fulfill'd) the circling hours
Their course resumed, and the successive months 570
With all their tedious days were spent, my friends,
Summoning me abroad, thus greeted me.

Sir ! recollect thy country, if indeed
The fates ordain thee to revisit safe
That country, and thy own glorious abode. 575

So they ; whose admonition I received
Well-pleased. Then, all the day, regaled we sat
At Circe's board with savoury viands rare,
And quaffing richest wine ; but when, the sun
Declining, darkness overshadow'd all, 580
Then, each within the dusky palace took
Custom'd repose, and to the Goddess' bed
Magnificent ascending, there I urged
My earnest suit, which gracious she received,
And in wing'd accents earnest thus I spake. 585

O Circe ! let us prove thy promise true ;
Dismiss us hence. My own desires, at length,
Tend homeward vehement, and the desires

No less of all my friends, who with complaints
Unheard by thee, wear my sad heart away. 590

So I ; to whom the Goddess in return.

Laertes' noble son, Ulysses famed
For deepest wisdom ! dwell not longer here,
Thou and thy followers, in my abode
Reluctant. But your next must be a course 595
Far different ; hence departing, ye must seek
The dreary house of Ades and of dread
Persephone, there to consult the Seer
Theban Tiresias, prophet blind, but blest
With faculties which death itself hath spared. 600
To him alone, of all the dead, Hell's Queen
Gives still to prophecy, while others flit
Mere forms, the shadows of what once they were.

She spake, and by her words dash'd from my soul
All courage ; weeping on the bed I sat, 605
Reckless of life and of the light of day.
But when, with tears and rolling to and fro
Sate, I felt relief, thus I replied.

O Circe ! with what guide shall I perform
This voyage, unperform'd by living man ? 610

I spake, to whom the Goddess quick replied.
Brave Laertiades ! let not the fear
To want a guide distress thee. Once on board,
Your mast erected, and your canvas white
Unfurled, sit thou ; the breathing North shall waft 615
Thy vessel on. But when ye shall have cross'd
The broad expanse of Ocean, and shall reach
The oozy shore, where grow the poplar groves
And fruitless willows wan of Proserpine,
Push thither through the gulfy Deep thy bark, 620
And, landing, haste to Pluto's murky abode.
There, into Acheron runs not alone
Dread Pyriphlegethon, but Cocytus loud,
From Styx derived ; there also stands a rock,
At whose broad base the roaring rivers meet. 625
There, thrusting, as I bid, thy bark ashore,
O Hero ! scoop the soil, opening a trench
Ell-broad on every side ; then pour around
Libation consecrate to all the dead,

First, milk with honey mixt, then luscious wine,
Then water, sprinkling, last, meal over all. 630
Next supplicate the unsubstantial forms,
Fervently of the dead, vowing to slay,
(Return'd to Ithaca) in thy own house,
An heifer barren yet, fairest and best 635
Of all thy herds, and to enrich the pile
With delicacies such as please the shades ;
But, in peculiar, to Tiresias vow
A sable-ram, noblest of all thy flocks.
When thus thou hast propitiated with prayer 640
All the illustrious nations of the dead,
Next thou shalt sacrifice to them a ram
And sable ewe, turning the face of each
Right toward Erebus, and look thyself,
Meantime, askance toward the river's course. 645
Souls numerous, soon, of the departed dead
Will thither flock ; then strenuous urge thy friends,
Playing the victims which thy ruthless steel
Hath slain, to burn them, and to soothe by prayer
Illustrious Pluto and dread Proserpine. 650
While thus is done, thou seated at the foss,
Faulchion in hand, chase thence the airy forms
Afar, nor suffer them to approach the blood,
Till with Tiresias thou have first conferr'd.
Then, glorious Chief ! the Prophet shall himself 655
Appear, who will instruct thee, and thy course
Delineate, measuring from place to place
Thy whole return athwart the fishy flood.
While thus she spake, the golden dawn arose,
When, putting on me my attire, the nymph 660
Next cloth'd herself, and girding to her waist
With an embroider'd zone her snowy robe
Graceful, redundant, veil'd her beauteous head.
Then, ranging the wide palace, I aroused
My followers, standing at the side of each— 665
Up ! sleep no longer ! let us quick depart,
For thus the Goddess hath, herself, advised.
So I, whose early summons my brave friends
With readiness obey'd. Yet even thence
I brought not all my crew. There was a youth, 670

Youngest of all my train, Elpenor ; one
Not much in estimation for desert
In arms, nor prompt in understanding more,
Who, overcharged with wine, and covetous
Of cooler air, high on the palace-roof 675
Of Circe slept, apart from all the rest.
Awaken'd by the clamour of his friends
Newly arisen, he also sprang to rise,
And in his haste, forgetful where to find
The deep-descending stairs, plunged through the roof. 680
With neck-bone broken from the vertebrae
Outstretch'd he lay ; his spirit sought the shades.

Then, thus to my assembling friends I spake.
Ye think, I doubt not, of an homeward course,
But Circe points me to the drear abode 685
Of Proserpine and Pluto, to consult
The spirit of Tiresias, Theban seer.

I ended, and the hearts of all alike
Felt consternation ; on the earth they sat
Disconsolate, and plucking each his hair, 690
Yet profit none of all their sorrow found.

But while we sought my galley on the beach,
With tepid tears bedewing, as we went,
Our cheeks, meantime the Goddess to the shore
Descending, bound within the bark a ram 695
And sable ewe, passing us unperceived.
For who hath eyes that can discern a God
Going or coming, if he shun the view ?

BOOK XI.

A R G U M E N T.

Ulysses relates to Alcinoüs his voyage to the infernal regions, his conference there with the prophet Tiresias concerning his return to Ithaca, and gives him an account of the heroes, heroines, and others whom he saw there.

ARRIVING on the shore, and launching, first,
 Our bark into the sacred Deep, we set
 Our mast and sails, and stow'd secure on board
 The ram and ewe, then, weeping, and with hearts
 Sad and disconsolate, embark'd ourselves. 5
 And now, melodious Circe, nymph divine,
 Sent after us a canvas-stretching breeze,
 Pleasant companion of our course, and we
 (The decks and benches clear'd) untoiling sat,
 While managed gales sped swift the bark along. 10
 All day, with sails distended, o'er the Deep
 She flew, and when the sun at length declined,
 And twilight dim had shadow'd all the ways,
 Approach'd the bourn of Ocean's vast profound.
 The city, there, of the Cimmerians stands 15
 With clouds and darkness veil'd, on whom the sun
 Deigns not to look with his beam-darting eye,
 Or when he climbs the starry arch, or when
 Earthward he slopes again his westering¹ wheels,
 But sad night canopies the woful race. 20
 We haled the bark aground, and landing there
 The ram and sable ewe, journey'd beside
 The Deep, till we arrived where Circe bade.
 Here Perimides' son Eurylochus
 Held fast the destined sacrifice, while I 25
 Scoop'd with my sword the soil, opening a trench
 Ell-broad on every side, then pour'd around

¹ Milton.

Libation consecrate to all the dead,
First, milk with honey mixt, then luscious wine,
Then water, sprinkling, last, meal over all. 30
This done, adoring the unreal forms
And shadows of the dead, I vow'd to slay,
(Return'd to Ithaca) in my own abode,
An heifer barren yet, fairest and best
Of all my herds, and to enrich the pile 35
With delicacies, such as please the shades.
But in peculiar, to the Theban seer
I vow'd a sable ram, largest and best
Of all my flocks. When thus I had implored,
With vows and prayer, the nations of the dead, 40
Piercing the victims next, I turn'd them both
To bleed into the trench; then swarming came
From Erebus the shades of the deceased,
Brides, youths unwedded, seniors long with woe
Oppress'd, and tender girls yet new to grief. 45
Came also many a warrior by the spear
In battle pierced, with armour gore-distain'd,
And all the multitude around the foss
Stalk'd shrieking dreadful; me pale horror seized.
I next, importunate, my people urged, 50
Playing the victims which myself had slain,
To burn them, and to supplicate in prayer
Illustrious Pluto and dread Proserpine.
Then down I sat, and with drawn faulchion chased
The ghosts, nor suffer'd them to approach the blood, 55
Till with Tiresias I should first confer.

 The spirit, first, of my companion came,
Elpenor; for no burial honours yet
Had he received, but we had left his corse
In Circe's palace, tombless, undeplored, 60
Ourselves by pressure urged of other cares.
Touch'd with compassion seeing him, I wept,
And in wing'd accents brief him thus bespake.

 Elpenor! how camest thou into the realms
Of darkness? Hast thou, though on foot, so far 65
Outstripp'd my speed, who in my bark arrived?

 So I, to whom with tears he thus replied.
Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!

Fool'd by some dæmon and the intemperate bowl,
I perish'd in the house of Circe ; there 70
The deep-descending steps heedless I miss'd,
And fell precipitated from the roof.
With neck-bone broken from the vertebræ
Outstretch'd I lay ; my spirit sought the shades.
But now, by those whom thou hast left at home, 75
By thy Penelope, and by thy sire,
The gentle nourisher of thy infant growth,
And by thy only son Telemachus,
I make my suit to thee. For sure, I know,
That from the house of Pluto safe return'd, 80
Thou shalt ere long thy gallant vessel moor
At the Ææan isle. Ah ! there arrived
Remember me. Leave me not undeplord
Nor uninhumed, lest, for my sake, the Gods
In vengeance visit thee ; but with my arms 85
(What arms soe'er I left) burn me, and raise
A kind memorial of me on the coast,
Heap'd high with earth ; that an unhappy man
May yet enjoy an unforgotten name.
Thus do at my request, and on my hill 90
Funereal plant the oar with which I row'd,
While yet I lived a mariner of thine.

He spake, to whom thus answer I return'd.
Poor youth ! I will perform thy whole desire.

Thus we, there sitting, doleful converse held, 95
With outstretch'd faulchion, I guarding the blood,
And my companion's shadowy semblance sad
Meantime discoursing me on various themes.
The soul of my departed mother, next,
Of Anticleia came, daughter of brave 100
Autolycus ; whom when I sought the shores
Of Ilium, I had living left at home.
Seeing her, with compassion touch'd, I wept,
Yet even her, (although it pain'd my soul)
Forbad, relentless, to approach the blood, 105
Till with Tiresias I should first confer.
Then came the spirit of the Theban seer
Himself, his golden sceptre in his hand,
Who knew me, and, enquiring, thus began.

Why, hapless Chief! leaving the cheerful day, 110
 Arrivest thou to behold the dead and this
 Unpleasant land? but, from the trench awhile
 Receding, turn thy faulchion keen away,
 That I may drink the blood, and tell thee truth.
 He spake; I thence receding, deep infix'd 115
 My sword bright-studded in the sheath again.
 The noble prophet then, approaching, drank
 The blood, and satisfied, address'd me thus.
 Thou seek'st a pleasant voyage home again,
 Renown'd Ulysses! but a God will make 120
 That voyage difficult; for, as I judge,
 Thou wilt not pass by Neptune unperceived,
 Whose anger follows thee, for that thou hast
 Deprived his son the Cyclops of his eye.
 At length, however, after numerous woes 125
 Endured, thou may'st attain thy native isle,
 If thy own appetite thou wilt control
 And theirs who follow thee, what time thy bark
 Well-built, shall at Thrinacia's² shore arrive,
 Escaped from perils of the gloomy Deep. 130
 There shall ye find grazing the flocks and herds
 Of the all-seeing and all-hearing Sun,
 Which, if attentive to thy safe return,
 Thou leave unharm'd, though after numerous woes
 Ye may at length arrive in Ithaca. 135
 But if thou violate them, I denounce
 Destruction on thy ship and all thy band,
 And though thyself escape, late shalt thou reach
 Thy home and ³hard-bested, in a strange bark,
 All thy companions lost; trouble beside 140
 Awaits thee there, for thou shalt find within
 Proud suitors of thy noble wife, who waste
 Thy substance, and with promised spousal gifts
 Ceaseless solicit her to wed; yet well
 Shalt thou avenge all their injurious deeds. 145
 That once perform'd, and every suitor slain

² The shore of Sicily, commonly called Trinacria, but *euphonicè* by Homer, Thrinacia.

³ The expression is used by Milton, and signifies—Beset with many difficulties.

Either by stratagem, or face to face
In thy own palace, bearing, as thou goest,
A shapely oar, journey till thou hast found
A people who the sea know not, nor eat 150
Food salted; they trim galley crimson-prow'd
Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth-shaven oar,
With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves.
Well thou shalt know them; this shall be the sign
When thou shalt meet a traveller, who shall name 155
The oar on thy broad shoulder borne, a van,⁴
There, deep infixing it within the soil,
Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,
A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek
Thy home again, and sacrifice at home 160
An hecatomb to the Immortal Gods,
Adoring each duly, and in his course.
So shalt thou die in peace a gentle death,
Remote from Ocean; it shall find thee late,
In soft serenity of age, the Chief 165
Of a blest people.—I have told thee truth.

He spake, to whom I answer thus return'd.
Tiresias! thou, I doubt not, hast reveal'd
The ordinance of heaven. But tell me, Seer!
And truly. I behold my mother's shade; 170
Silent she sits beside the blood, nor word
Nor even look vouchsafes to her own son.
How shall she learn, prophet! that I am hers?

So I, to whom Tiresias quick replied.
The course is easy. Learn it, taught by me. 175
What shade soe'er, by leave from thee obtain'd,
Shall taste the blood, that shade will tell thee truth;
The rest, prohibited, will all retire.

When thus the spirit of the royal Seer
Had his prophetic mind reveal'd, again 180
He entered Pluto's gates; but I unmoved
Still waited till my mother's shade approach'd;
She drank the blood, then knew me, and in words
Wing'd with affection, plaintive, thus began.

My son! how hast thou enter'd, still alive, 185

⁴ Mistaking the oar for a corn-van. A sure indication of his ignorance of maritime concerns.

This darksome region? Difficult it is
For living man to view the realms of death.
Broad rivers roll, and awful floods between,
But chief, the Ocean, which to pass on foot,
Or without ship, impossible is found.
Hast thou, long-wandering in thy voyage home
From Ilium, with thy ship and crew arrived,
Ithaca and thy consort yet unseen?

190

She spake, to whom this answer I return'd.
My mother! me necessity constrain'd
To Pluto's dwelling, anxious to consult
Theban Tiresias; for I have not yet
Approach'd Achaia, nor have touch'd the shore
Of Ithaca, but suffering ceaseless woe
Have roam'd, since first in Agamemnon's train
I went to combat with the sons of Troy.
But speak, my mother, and the truth alone;
What stroke of fate slew *thee*? Fell'st thou a prey
To some slow malady? or by the shafts
Of gentle Dian suddenly subdued?

195

200

205

Speak to me also of my ancient Sire,
And of Telemachus, whom I left at home;
Possess I still unalienate and safe
My property, or hath some happier Chief
Admittance free into my fortunes gain'd,
No hope subsisting more of my return?
The mind and purpose of my wedded wife
Declare thou also. Dwells she with our son
Faithful to my domestic interests,
Or is she wedded to some Chief of Greece?

210

215

I ceased, when thus the venerable shade.
Not so; she faithful still and patient dwells
Thy roof beneath; but all her days and nights
Devoting sad to anguish and to tears.
Thy fortunes still are thine; Telemachus
Cultivates, undisturb'd, thy land, and sits
At many a noble banquet, such as well
Beseems the splendour of his princely state,
For all invite him. At his farm retired
Thy father dwells, nor to the city comes
For aught; nor bed, nor furniture of bed,

220

225

Furr'd cloaks or splendid arras he enjoys,
But with his servile hinds all winter sleeps
In ashes and in dust at the hearth-side,
Coarsely attired; again, when summer comes, 230
Or genial autumn, on the fallen leaves
In any nook, not curious where, he finds
An humble couch among his fruitful vines.
There, stretch'd forlorn, nourishing grief, he weeps
Thy lot, enfeebled now by numerous years. 235
So perish'd I; such fate I also found;
Me, neither the right-aiming archeress struck,
Diana, with her gentle shafts, nor me
Distemper slew, my limbs by slow degrees,
But sure, bereaving of their little life; 240
But long regret, tender solicitude,
And recollection of thy kindness past,
These, my Ulysses! fatal proved to me.

She said; I ardent wish'd to clasp the shade
Of my departed mother; thrice I sprang 245
Toward her, by desire impetuous urged,
And thrice she flitted from between my arms
Light as a passing shadow or a dream.
Then, pierced by keener grief, in accents wing'd
With filial earnestness I thus replied. 250

My mother, why elud'st thou my attempt
To clasp thee, that even here, in Pluto's realm,
We might to full satiety indulge
Our grief enfolded in each other's arms?
Hath Proserpine, alas! only dispatch'd 255
A shadow to me, to augment my woe?

Then, instant, thus the venerable form.
Ah, son! thou most afflicted of mankind!
On thee, Jove's daughter, Proserpine, obtrudes
No airy semblance vain; but such the state 260
And nature is of mortals once deceased.
For they nor muscle have, nor flesh, nor bone;
All those (the spirit from the body once
Divorced) the violence of fire consumes,
And, like a dream, the soul flies swift away. 265
But haste thou back to light, and taught thyself
These sacred truths, hereafter teach thy spouse.

Thus mutual we conferr'd. Then, thither came,
 Encouraged forth by royal Proserpine,
 Shades female numerous, all who consorts, erst, 270
 Or daughters were of mighty Chiefs renown'd.
 About the sable blood frequent they swarm'd.
 But I considering sat, how I might each
 Interrogate, and thus resolved. My sword
 Forth drawing from beside my sturdy thigh, 275
 Firm I prohibited the ghosts to drink
 The blood together ; they successive came ;
 Each told her own distress ; I question'd all.
 There, first, the high-born Tyro I beheld ;
 She claim'd Salmoneus as her sire, and wife 280
 Was once of Cretheus, son of *Æolus*.
 Enamour'd of Enipeus, stream divine,
 Loveliest of all that water earth, beside
 His limpid current she was wont to stray,
 When Ocean's God (*Enipeus*' form assumed) 285
 Within the eddy-whirling river's mouth
 Embraced her ; there, while the o'er-arching flood,
 Uplifted mountainous, conceal'd the God
 And his fair human bride, her virgin zone
 He loosed, and o'er her eyes sweet sleep diffused. 290
 His amorous purpose satisfied, he grasp'd
 Her hand, affectionate, and thus he said.
 Rejoice in this my love, and when the year
 Shall tend to consummation of its course,
 Thou shalt produce illustrious twins, for love 295
 Immortal never is unfruitful love.
 Rear them with all a mother's care ; meantime,
 Hence to thy home. Be silent. Name it not.
 For I am Neptune, Shaker of the shores.
 So saying, he plunged into the billowy Deep. 300
 She, pregnant grown, *Pelias* and *Neleus* bore,
 Both valiant ministers of mighty *Jove*.
 In wide-spread *Iäolchus* *Pelias* dwelt,
 Of numerous flocks possess'd ; but his abode
 Amid the sands of *Pylus* *Neleus* chose. 305
 To *Cretheus* wedded next, the lovely nymph
 Yet other sons, *Æson* and *Pheres* bore,
 And *Amythaon* of equestrian fame.

I, next, the daughter of Asopus saw,
Antiope ; she gloried to have known 310
The embrace of Jove himself, to whom she brought
A double progeny, Amphion named
And Zethus ; they the seven-gated Thebes
Founded and girded with strong towers, because,
Though puissant Heroes both, in spacious Thebes, 315
Unfenced by towers, they could not dwell secure.

Alcmena, next, wife of Amphytrion,
I saw ; she in the arms of sovereign Jove
The lion-hearted Hercules conceived,
And, after, bore to Creon brave in fight 320
His daughter Megara, by the noble son
Unconquer'd of Amphytrion espoused.

The beauteous Epicaste⁵ saw I then,
Mother of Oedipus, who guilt incurr'd
Prodigious, wedded unintentional 325
To her own son ; his father first he slew,
Then wedded her, which soon the Gods divulged.
He, under vengeance of offended heaven,
In pleasant Thebes dwelt miserable, King
Of the Cadmean race ; she to the gates 330
Of Ades brazen-barr'd despairing went,
Self-strangled by a cord fasten'd aloft
To her own palace-roof, and woes bequeath'd
(Such as the Fury sisters execute
Innumerable) to her guilty son. 335

There also saw I Chloris, loveliest fair,
Whom Neleus woo'd and won with spousal gifts
Inestimable, by her beauty charm'd.
She youngest daughter was of Iasus' son,
Amphion, in old time a sovereign prince 340
In Minuëian Orchomenus,
And King of Pylus. Three illustrious sons
She bore to Neleus, Nestor, Chromius,
And Periclymenus the wide-renown'd,
And, last, produced a wonder of the earth, 345
Pero, by every neighbour prince around
In marriage sought ; but Neleus her on none
Deign'd to bestow, save only on the Chief

⁵ By the Tragedians called—Jocasta.

Who should from Phylace drive off the bees
 (Broad-fronted, and with jealous care secured) 350
 Of valiant Iphicles. One undertook
 That task alone, a prophet high in fame,
 Melampus ; but the Fates fast bound him there
 In rigorous bonds by rustic hands imposed.
 At length (the year, with all its months and days 355
 Concluded, and the new-born year begun)
 Illustrious Iphicles released the seer,
 Grateful⁶ for all the oracles resolved,
 Till then obscure. So stood the will of Jove.
 Next, Leda, wife of Tyndarus, I saw, 360
 Who bore to Tyndarus a noble pair,
 Castor the bold, and Pollux cestus-famed.
 They prisoners in the fertile womb of earth,
 Though living, dwell, and even there from Jove
 High privilege gain ; alternate they revive 365
 And die, and dignity partake divine.
 The consort of Aloëus, next, I view'd,
 Iphimedeia ; she the embrace profess'd
 Of Neptune to have shared, to whom she bore
 Two sons ; short-lived they were, but godlike both, 370
 Otus and Ephialtes far-renown'd.
 Orion sole except, all-bounteous Earth
 Ne'er nourish'd forms for beauty or for size
 To be admired as theirs ; in his ninth year
 Each measured, broad, nine cubits, and the height 375
 Was found nine ells of each. Against the Gods
 Themselves they threaten'd war, and to excite
 The din of battle in the realms above.
 To the Olympian summit they essay'd
 To heave up Ossa, and to Ossa's crown 380
 Branch-waving Pelion ; so to climb the heavens.
 Nor had they failed, maturer grown in might,
 To accomplish that emprize, but them the son⁷
 Of radiant-hair'd Latona and of Jove
 Slew both, ere yet the down of blooming youth 385

⁶ Iphicles had been informed by the Oracles, that he should have no children till instructed by a prophet how to obtain them ; a service which Melampus had the good fortune to render him.

⁷ Apollo.

Thick-sprung, their cheeks or chins had tufted o'er.

Phædra I also there, and Procris saw,
And Ariadne for her beauty praised,
Whose sire was all-wise Minos. Theseus her
From Crete toward the fruitful region bore 390
Of sacred Athens, but enjoy'd not there,
For, first, she perish'd by Diana's shafts
In Dia, Bacchus^s witnessing her crime.

Mæra and Clymene I saw beside,
And odious Eriphyle, who received 395
The price in gold of her own husband's life.

But all the wives of Heroes whom I saw,
And all their daughters, can I not relate ;
Night, first, would fail ; and even now the hour
Calls me to rest either on board my bark, 400
Or here ; meantime, I in yourselves confide,
And in the Gods to shape my conduct home.

He ceased ; the whole assembly silent sat,
Charm'd into ecstasy by his discourse
Throughout the twilight hall, till, at the last, 405
Areta ivory-arm'd them thus bespake.

Phæacians ! how appears he in your eyes
This stranger, graceful as he is in port,
In stature noble, and in mind discreet ?
My guest he is, but ye all share with me 410
That honour ; him dismiss not, therefore, hence
With haste, nor from such indigence withhold
Supplies gratuitous ; for ye are rich,
And by kind heaven with rare possessions blest.

The Hero, next, Echeneus spake, a Chief 415
Now ancient, eldest of Phæacia's sons.

Your prudent Queen, my friends, speaks not beside
Her proper scope, but as beseems her well.
Her voice obey ; yet the effect of all
Must on Alcinoüs himself depend. 420

To whom Alcinoüs, thus, the King, replied.
I ratify the word. So shall be done,
As surely as myself shall live supreme
O'er all Phæacia's maritime domain.

^s Bacchus accused her to Diana of having lain with Theseus in his temple, and the Goddess punished her with death.

Then let the guest, though anxious to depart, 425
 Wait till the morrow, that I may complete
 The whole donation. His safe conduct home
 Shall be the general care, but mine in chief,
 To whom dominion o'er the rest belongs.

Him answer'd, then, Ulysses ever-wise. 430
 Alcinoüs ! Prince ! exalted high o'er all
 Phæacia's sons ! should ye solicit, kind,
 My stay throughout the year, preparing still
 My conduct home, and with illustrious gifts
 Enriching me the while, even that request 435
 Should please me well ; the wealthier I return'd,
 The happier my condition ; welcome more
 And more respectable I should appear
 In every eye, to Ithaca restored.

To whom Alcinoüs answer thus return'd. 440
 Ulysses ! viewing thee, no fears we feel
 Lest thou, at length, some false pretender prove,
 Or subtle hypocrite, of whom no few
 Disseminated o'er its face the earth
 Sustains, adepts in fiction, and who frame 445
 Fables, where fables could be least surmised.
 Thy phrase well turn'd, and thy ingenuous mind
 Proclaim *thee* different far, who hast in strains
 Musical as a poet's voice, the woes
 Rehearsed of all thy Grecians, and thy own. 450
 But say, and tell me true. Beheld'st thou there
 None of thy followers to the walls of Troy
 Slain in that warfare ? Lo ! the night is long—
 A night of utmost length ; nor yet the hour
 Invites to sleep. Tell me thy wondrous deeds, 455
 For I could watch till sacred dawn, couldst thou
 So long endure to tell me of thy toils.

Then thus Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Alcinoüs ! high exalted over all
 Phæacia's sons ! the time suffices yet 460
 For converse both and sleep, and if thou wish
 To hear still more, I shall not spare to unfold
 More pitiable woes than these, sustain'd
 By my companions, in the end destroy'd ;
 Who saved from perils of disastrous war 465

At Ilium, perish'd yet in their return,
Victims of a pernicious woman's⁹ crime.

Now, when chaste Proserpine had wide dispersed
Those female shades, the spirit sore distress'd

Of Agamemnon, Atreus' son, appear'd ; 470

Encircled by a throng, he came ; by all

Who with himself beneath Ægisthus' roof

Their fate fulfill'd, perishing by the sword.

He drank the blood, and knew me ; shrill he wail'd

And querulous ; tears trickling bathed his cheeks, 475

And with spread palms, through ardour of desire,

He sought to enfold me fast, but vigour none,

Or force, as erst, his agile limbs inform'd.

I, pity-moved, wept at the sight, and him,

In accents wing'd by friendship, thus address'd. 480

Ah, glorious son of Atreus, King of men !

What hand inflicted the all-numbing stroke

Of death on thee ? Say didst thou perish sunk

By howling tempests irresistible

Which Neptune raised, or on dry land by force 485

Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off

Beeves from the herd, or driving flocks away,

Or fighting for Achaia's daughters, shut

Within some city's bulwarks close besieged ?

I ceased, when Agamemnon thus replied. 490

Ulysses, noble Chief, Laertes' son

For wisdom famed ! I neither perish'd sunk

By howling tempests irresistible

Which Neptune raised, nor on dry land received

From hostile multitudes the fatal blow, 495

But me Ægisthus slew ; my woful death

Confederate with my own pernicious wife

He plotted, with a show of love sincere

Bidding me to his board, where as the ox

Is slaughter'd at his crib, he slaughter'd me. 500

Such was my dreadful death ; carnage ensued

Continual of my friends slain all around,

Numerous as boars bright-tusk'd at nuptial feast,

Or feast convivial of some wealthy Chief.

Thou hast already witness'd many a field 505

⁹ Probably meaning Helen.

With warriors overspread, slain one by one,
But that dire scene had most thy pity moved,
For we, with brimming beakers at our side,
And underneath full tables, bleeding lay.
Blood floated all the pavement. Then the cries 510
Of Priam's daughter sounded in my ears
Most pitiable of all, Cassandra's cries,
Whom Clytemnestra close beside me slew.
Expiring as I lay, I yet essay'd
To grasp my faulchion, but the traitoress quick 515
Withdrew herself, nor would vouchsafe to close
My languid eyes, or prop my drooping chin
Even in the moment when I sought the shades.
So that the thing breathes not, ruthless and fell
As woman once resolved on such a deed 520
Detestable, as my base wife contrived,
The murder of the husband of her youth.
I thought to have return'd welcome to all,
To my own children and domestic train ;
But she, past measure profligate, hath pour'd 525
Shame on herself, on women yet unborn,
And even on the virtuous of her sex.

He ceased, to whom, thus, answer I return'd.
Gods ! how severely hath the Thunderer plagued
The house of Atreus, even from the first, 530
By female counsels ! we for Helen's sake
Have numerous died, and Clytemnestra framed,
While thou wast far remote, this snare for thee !

So I, to whom Atrides thus replied.
Thou, therefore, be not pliant overmuch 535
To woman ; trust her not with all thy mind,
But half disclose to her, and half conceal.
Yet, from thy consort's hand no bloody death,
My friend, hast thou to fear ; for passing wise
Icarius' daughter is, far other thoughts, 540
Intelligent, and other plans, to frame.
Her, going to the wars we left a bride
New-wedded, and the boy hung at her breast,
Who, man himself, consorts ere now with men
A prosperous youth ; his father, safe restored 545
To his own Ithaca, shall see him soon,

And *he* shall clasp his father in his arms
As nature bids ; but me, my cruel one
Indulged not with the dear delight to gaze
On my Orestes, for she slew me first. 550
But listen¹⁰ ; treasure what I now impart.
Steer secret to thy native isle ; avoid
Notice ; for woman merits trust no more.
Now tell me truth. Hear ye in whose abode
My son resides ? dwells he in Pylus, say, 555
Or in Orchomenos, or else beneath
My brother's roof in Sparta's wide domain ?
For my Orestes is not yet a shade.

So he, to whom I answer thus return'd :
Atides, ask not me. Whether he live, 560
Or have already died, I nothing know ;
Mere words are vanity, and better spared.

Thus we discoursing mutual stood, and tears
Shedding disconsolate. The shade, meantime,
Came of Achilles, Peleus' mighty son ; 565
Patroclus also, and Antilochus
Appear'd, with Ajax, for proportion just
And stature tall, (Pelides sole except)
Distinguish'd above all Achaia's sons.
The soul of swift Æacides at once 570
Knew me, and in wing'd accents thus began.

Brave Laertiades, for wiles renown'd !
What mightier enterprize than all the past
Hath made thee here a guest ? rash as thou art !
How hast thou dared to penetrate the gloom 575
Of Ades, dwelling of the shadowy dead,
Semblances only of what once they were ?

He spake, to whom I, answering, thus replied.
O Peleus' son ! Achilles ! bravest far
Of all Achaia's race ! I here arrived 580
Seeking Tiresias, from his lips to learn,
Perchance, how I might safe regain the coast
Of craggy Ithaca ; for tempest-toss'd

¹⁰ This is, surely, one of the most natural strokes to be found in any poet. Convinced, for a moment, by the virtues of Penelope, he mentions her with respect ; but recollecting himself suddenly, involves even her in his general ill opinion of the sex, begotten in him by the crimes of Clytemnestra.

Perpetual, I have neither yet approach'd
 Achaia's shore, or landed on my own. 585
 But as for thee, Achilles! never man
 Hath known felicity like thine, or shall,
 Whom living we all honour'd as a God,
 And who maintain'st, here resident, supreme
 Control among the dead; indulge not then, 590
 Achilles, causeless grief that thou hast died.

I ceased, and answer thus instant received.
 Renown'd Ulysses! think not death a theme
 Of consolation; I had rather live
 The servile hind for hire, and eat the bread 595
 Of some man scantily himself sustain'd,
 Than sovereign empire hold o'er all the shades.
 But come—speak to me of my noble boy;
 Proceeds he, as he promised, brave in arms,
 Or shuns he war? Say also hast thou heard 600
 Of royal Peleus? shares he still respect
 Among his numerous Myrmidons, or scorn
 In Hellas and in Phthia, for that age
 Predominates in his enfeebled limbs?
 For help is none in me; the glorious sun 605
 No longer sees me such, as when in aid
 Of the Achaians I o'erspread the field
 Of spacious Troy with all their bravest slain.
 Oh¹¹ might I, vigorous as then, repair
 For one short moment to my father's house, 610
 They all should tremble; I would show an arm,
 Such as should daunt the fiercest who presumes
 To injure *him*, or to despise his age.

Achilles spake, to whom I thus replied.
 Of noble Peleus have I nothing heard; 615
 But I will tell thee, as thou biddest, the truth
 Unfeign'd of Neoptolemus thy son;
 For him, myself, on board my hollow bark
 From Scyros to Achaia's host convey'd.
 Oft as in council under Ilium's walls 620

¹¹ Another most beautiful stroke of nature. Ere yet Ulysses has had opportunity to answer, the very thought that Peleus may possibly be insulted, fires him, and he takes the whole for granted. Thus is the impetuous character of Achilles sustained to the last moment.

We met, he ever foremost was in speech,
 Nor spake erroneous ; Nestor and myself
 Except, no Grecian could with him compare.
 Oft, too, as we with battle hemm'd around
 Troy's bulwarks from among the mingled crowd 625
 Thy son sprang foremost into martial act,
 Inferior in heroic worth to none.
 Beneath him numerous fell the sons of Troy
 In dreadful fight, nor have I power to name
 Distinctly all, who by his glorious arm,
 Exerted in the cause of Greece, expired. 630
 Yet will I name Eurypylus, the son
 Of Telephus, an Hero whom his sword
 Of life bereaved, and all around him strew'd
 The plain with his Cetean warriors, won 635
 To Ilium's side by bribes¹² to women given.
 Save noble Memnon only, I beheld
 No Chief at Ilium beautiful as he.
 Again, when we within the horse of wood
 Framed by Epeüs sat, an ambush chosen 640
 Of all the bravest Greeks, and I in trust
 Was placed to open or to keep fast-closed
 The hollow fraud ; then every Chieftain there
 And Senator of Greece wiped from his cheeks
 The tears, and tremors felt in every limb ; 645
 But never saw I changed to terror's hue
His ruddy cheeks, no tears wiped *he* away,
 But oft he press'd me to go forth, his suit
 With prayers enforcing, griping hard his hilt
 And his brass-burden'd spear, and dire revenge 650
 Denouncing, ardent, on the race of Troy.
 At length, when we had sack'd the lofty town
 Of Priam, laden with abundant spoils
 He safe embark'd, neither by spear or shaft
 Aught hurt, or in close fight by faulchion's edge, 655

² *Γυναικῶν εἰνεκα δῶρων*—Priam is said to have influenced by gifts the wife and mother of Eurypylus, to persuade him to the assistance of Troy, he being himself unwilling to engage. The passage, through defect of history, has long been dark, and commentators have adapted different senses to it, all conjectural. The Ceteans are said to have been a people of Mysia, of which Eurypylus was king.

As oft in war befalls, where wounds are dealt
Promiscuous, at the will of fiery Mars.

So I; then striding large, the spirit thence
Withdrew of swift *Æacides*, along
The hoary¹³ mead pacing with joy elate
That I had blazon'd bright his son's renown.

660

The other souls of men by death dismiss'd
Stood mournful by, sad uttering each his woes;
The soul alone I saw standing remote
Of *Telamonian Ajax*, still incensed
That in our public contest for the arms
Worn by *Achilles*, and by *Thetis* thrown
Into dispute, my claim had strongest proved,
Troy and *Minerva* judges of the cause.

665

Disastrous victory! which I could wish
Not to have won, since for that armour's sake
The earth hath cover'd *Ajax*, in his form
And martial deeds superior far to all
The *Grecians*, *Peleus'* matchless son except.
I, seeking to appease him, thus began.

670

675

O *Ajax*, son of glorious *Telamon*!
Canst thou remember, even after death,
Thy wrath against me, kindled for the sake
Of those pernicious arms? arms which the Gods
Ordain'd of such dire consequence to Greece,
Which caused thy death, our bulwark! Thee we mourn
With grief perpetual, nor the death lament
Of *Peleus'* son, *Achilles*, more than thine.
Yet none is blameable; *Jove* evermore
With bitterest hate pursued *Achaia's* host,
And he ordain'd thy death. Hero! approach,
That thou may'st hear the words with which I seek
To soothe thee! let thy long displeasure cease!
Quell all resentment in thy generous breast!

680

685

I spake; nought answer'd he, but sullen join'd
His fellow ghosts; yet, angry as he was,
I had prevail'd even on him to speak,
Or had, at least, accosted him again,

690

¹³ Καρ' ασφοδελον λειμωνα—*Asphodel* was planted on the graves, and around the tombs of the deceased, and hence the supposition, that the Stygian plain was clothed with *asphodel*. F.

But that my bosom teem'd with strong desire
Urgent to see yet others of the dead.

605

There saw I Minos, offspring famed of Jove ;
His golden sceptre in his hand, he sat
Judge of the dead ; they, pleading each in turn
His cause, some stood, some sat, filling the house
Whose spacious folding gates are never closed.

700

Orion next, huge ghost, engaged my view,
Droves urging o'er the grassy mead of beasts
Which he had slain, himself, on the wild hills,
With strong club arm'd of ever-during brass.

705

There also Tityus on the ground I saw
Extended, offspring of the glorious earth ;
Nine acres he o'erspread, and, at his side
Station'd, two vultures on his liver prey'd,
Scooping his entrails ; nor sufficed his hands
To fray them thence ; for he had sought to force
Latona, illustrious concubine of Jove,
What time the Goddess journey'd o'er the rocks
Of Pytho into pleasant Panopeus.

710

Next, suffering grievous torments, I beheld
Tantalus ; in a pool he stood, his chin
Wash'd by the wave ; thirst-parch'd he seem'd, but found
Nought to assuage his thirst ; for when he bow'd
His hoary head, ardent to quaff, the flood
Vanish'd absorb'd, and at his feet, adust
The soil appear'd, dried, instant, by the Gods.
Tall trees, fruit-laden, with inflected heads
Stoop'd to him, pears, pomegranates, apples bright,
The luscious fig, and unctuous olive smooth :
Which when with sudden grasp he would have seized,
Winds whirl'd them high into the dusky clouds.

715

720

725

There too, the hard-task'd Sisyphus I saw,
Thrusting¹⁴ before him, strenuous, a vast rock.
With hands and feet struggling, he shoved the stone
Up to a hill-top ; but the steep well-nigh
Vanquish'd, by some¹⁵ great force repulsed, the mass

730

¹⁴ Βασίζοντα must have this sense interpreted by what follows. To attempt to make the English numbers expressive as the Greek, is a labour like that of Sisyphus. The translator has done what he could.

¹⁵ It is now, perhaps, impossible to ascertain with precision what Homer meant by the word *καραυῖς*, which he uses only here and in the next Book,

Rush'd again obstinate down to the plain.
Again stretch'd prone, severe he toil'd, the sweat
Bathed all his weary limbs, and his head reek'd.

The might of Hercules I next survey'd ;
His semblance ; for himself their banquet shares 735
With the Immortal Gods, and in his arms
Enfolds neat-footed Hebe, daughter fair
Of Jove, and of his golden-sandal'd spouse.
Around him, clamorous as birds, the dead
Swarm'd turbulent ; he gloomy-brow'd as night, 740
With uncased bow and arrow on the string
Peer'd terrible from side to side, as one
Ever in act to shoot ; a dreadful belt
He bore athwart his bosom, thong'd with gold.
There, broider'd shone many a stupendous form, 745
Bears, wild-boars, lions with fire-flashing eyes,
Fierce combats, battles, bloodshed, homicide.
The artist, author of that belt, none such
Before produced, or after. Me his eye
No sooner mark'd, than knowing me, in words 750
By sorrow quick suggested, he began.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
Ah hapless Hero ! thou art, doubtless, charged,
Thou also, with some arduous labour, such
As in the realms of day I once endured. 755
Son was I of Saturnian Jove, yet woes
Immense sustain'd, subjected to a King
Inferior far to me, whose harsh commands
Enjoin'd me many a terrible exploit.
He even bade me on a time lead hence 760
The dog, that task believing above all
Impracticable ; yet from Ades him
I dragg'd reluctant into light, by aid
Of Hermes, and of Pallas azure-eyed.

So saying, he penetrated deep again 765
The abode of Pluto ; but I still unmoved
There stood expecting, curious, other shades
To see of Heroes in old time deceased.

where it is the name of Scylla's dam.—*Αναιδης* is also of very doubtful explication.

And now, more ancient worthies still, and whom
 I wish'd, I had beheld Pirithoüs 770
 And Theseus, glorious progeny of Gods,
 But nations, first, numberless of the dead
 Came shrieking hideous : me pale horror seized,
 Lest awful Proserpine should thither send
 The Gorgon-head from Ades, sight abhorr'd ! 775
 I, therefore, hasting to the vessel, bade
 My crew embark, and cast the hawsers loose.
 They, quick embarking, on the benches sat.
 Down the Oceanus¹⁶ the current bore
 My galley, winning, at the first, her way 780
 With oars, then wafted by propitious gales.

¹⁶ The two first lines of the following book seem to ascertain the true meaning of the conclusion of this, and to prove sufficiently that by 'Ὠκεανὸς here, Homer could not possibly intend any other than a river. In those lines he tells us in the plainest terms, that *the ship left the stream of the river Oceanus, and arrived in the open sea.* Diodorus Siculus informs us, that 'Ὠκεανὸς had been a name anciently given to the Nile. See Clarke.

BOOK XII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, pursuing his narrative, relates his return from the shades to Circe's island, the precautions given him by that Goddess, his escape from the Sirens, and from Scylla and Charybdis ; his arrival in Sicily, where his companions, having slain and eaten the oxen of the Sun, are afterward shipwrecked and lost ; and concludes the whole with an account of his arrival, alone, on the mast of his vessel at the island of Calypso.

AND now, borne seaward from the river-stream
 Of the Oceanus we plough'd again
 The spacious Deep, and reach'd the Ææan isle,
 Where, daughter of the dawn, Aurora takes
 Her choral sports, and whence the sun ascends. 5
 We, there arriving, thrust our bark aground
 On the smooth beach, then landed, and on the shore
 Reposed, expectant of the sacred dawn.
 But soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
 Look'd forth again, sending my friends before, 10
 I bade them bring Elpenor's body down
 From the abode of Circe to the beach.
 Then on the utmost headland of the coast
 We timber fell'd, and sorrowing o'er the dead,
 His funeral rites water'd with tears profuse. 15
 The dead consumed, and with the dead his arms,
 We heap'd his tomb, and the sepulchral post
 Erecting, fix'd his shapely oar aloft.
 Thus, punctual, we perform'd ; nor our return
 From Ades knew not Circe, but attired 20
 In haste, ere long arrived, with whom appear'd
 Her female train with plenteous viands charged,
 And bright wine rosy-red. Amidst us all
 Standing, the beauteous Goddess thus began.
 Ah miserable ! who have sought the shades 25
 Alive ! while others of the human race

Die only once, appointed twice to die !
Come—take ye food ; drink wine ; and on the shore
All day regale, for ye shall hence again
At day-spring o'er the Deep ; but I will mark 30
Myself your future course, nor uninform'd
Leave you in aught, lest through some dire mistake,
By sea or land new miseries ye incur.

The Goddess spake, whose invitation kind
We glad accepted ; thus we feasting sat 35
Till set of sun, and quaffing richest wine ;
But when the sun went down and darkness fell,
My crew beside the hawsers slept, while me
The Goddess by the hand leading apart,
First bade me sit, then, seated opposite, 40
Enquired, minute, of all that I had seen,
And I, from first to last, recounted all.
Then thus the awful Goddess in return.

Thus far thy toils are finish'd. Now attend !
Mark well my words, of which the Gods will sure 45
Themselves remind thee in the needful hour.
First shalt thou reach the Sirens ; they the hearts
Enchant of all who on their coast arrive.
The wretch, who unforewarn'd approaching, hears
The Sirens' voice, his wife and little-ones 50
Ne'er fly to gratulate his glad return ;
But him the Sirens sitting in the meads
Charm with mellifluous song, while all around
The bones accumulated lie of men
Now putrid, and the skins mouldering away. 55
But, pass them thou, and lest thy people hear
Those warblings, ere thou yet approach, fill all
Their ears with wax moulded between thy palms ;
But as for thee—thou hear them if thou wilt.
Yet let thy people bind thee to the mast 60
Erect, encompassing thy feet and arms
With cordage well-secured to the mast-foot,
So shalt thou, raptured, hear the Sirens' song.
But if thou supplicate to be released,
Or give such order, then, with added cords 65
Let thy companions bind thee still the more.
When thus thy people shall have safely pass'd

The Sirens by, think not from me to learn
 What course thou next shall steer ; two will occur ;
 Deliberate choose : I shall describe them both. 70
 Here vaulted rocks impend, dash'd by the waves
 Immense of Amphitrite azure-eyed ;
 The blessed Gods those rocks, Erratic, call.
 Birds cannot pass them safe ; no, not the doves
 Which his ambrosia bear to Father Jove, 75
 But even of those doves the slippery rock
 Proves fatal still to one, for which the God
 Supplies another, lest the number fail.
 No ship, what ship soever there arrives,
 Escapes them, but both mariners and planks 80
 Whelm'd under billows of the Deep, or, caught
 By fiery tempests, sudden disappear.
 Those rocks the billow-cleaving bark alone,
 The Argo, further'd by the vows of all,
 Pass'd safely, sailing from Ææta's isle ; 85
 Nor she had pass'd, but surely dash'd had been
 On those huge rocks, but that, propitious still
 To Jason, Juno sped her safe along.
 These rocks are two ; one lifts his summit sharp
 High as the spacious heavens, wrapt in dun clouds 90
 Perpetual, which nor autumn sees dispersed
 Nor summer, for the sun shines never there ;
 No mortal man might climb it or descend,
 Though twice ten hands and twice ten feet he own'd,
 For it is levigated as by art. 95
 Down scoop'd to Erebus, a cavern drear
 Yawns in the centre of its western side ;
 Pass it, renown'd Ulysses ! but aloof
 So far, that a keen arrow smartly sent
 Forth from thy bark should fail to reach the cave. 100
 There Scylla dwells, and thence her howl is heard
 Tremendous ; shrill her voice is as the note
 Of hound new-whelp'd, but hideous her aspect,
 Such as no mortal man, nor even a God
 Encountering her, should with delight survey. 105
 Her feet are twelve, all fore-feet ; six her necks
 Of hideous length, each clubb'd into a head
 Terrific, and each head with fangs is arm'd

In triple row, thick-planted, stored with death.
Plunged to her middle in the hollow den 110
She lurks, protruding from the black abyss
Her heads, with which the ravening monster dives
In quest of dolphins, dog-fish, or of prey
More bulky, such as in the roaring gulfs
Of Amphitrite without end abounds. 115
It is no seaman's boast that e'er he slipp'd
Her cavern by, unharm'd. In every mouth
She bears upcaught a mariner away.
The other rock, Ulysses, thou shalt find
Humbler, a bow-shot only from the first; 120
On this a wild-fig grows broad-leaved, and here
Charybdis dire ingulfs the sable flood.
Each day she thrice disgorges, and each day
Thrice swallows it. Ah! well-forewarned beware
What time she swallows, that thou come not nigh, 125
For not himself, Neptune, could snatch thee thence,
Close passing Scylla's rock, shoot swift thy bark
Beyond it, since the loss of six alone
Is better far than shipwreck made of all.
So Circe spake, to whom I thus replied. 130
Tell me, O Goddess, next, and tell me true!
If, chance, from fell Charybdis I escape,
May I not also save from Scylla's force
My people, should the monster threaten them?
I said, and quick the Goddess in return. 135
Unhappy! can exploits and toils of war
Still please thee? yield'st not to the Gods themselves?
She is no mortal, but a deathless pest,
Impracticable, savage, battle-proof.
Defence is vain; flight is thy sole resource. 140
For should'st thou linger putting on thy arms
Beside the rock, beware lest darting forth
Her numerous heads, she seize with every mouth
A Grecian, and with others, even thee.
Pass therefore swift, and passing, loud invoke 145
Cratais, mother of this plague of man,
Who will forbid her to assail thee more.
Thou, next, shall reach Thrinacia; there, the beeves
And fatted flocks graze numerous of the Sun;

Seven herds ; as many flocks of snowy fleece ; 150
Fifty in each ; they breed not, neither die,
Nor are they kept by less than Goddesses,
Lampetia fair, and Phæthusa, both
By nymph Næra to Hyperion borne.
Them, soon as she had train'd them to an age 155
Proportion'd to that charge, their mother sent
Into Thrinacia, there to dwell and keep
Inviolatè their father's flocks and herds.
If, anxious for a safe return, thou spare
Those herds and flocks, though after much endured, 160
Ye may at last your Ithaca regain ;
But should'st thou violate them, I foretell
Destruction of thy ship and of thy crew,
And though thyself escape, thou shalt return
Late, in ill plight, and all thy friends destroy'd. 165
She ended, and the golden morning dawn'd.
Then, all-divine, her graceful steps she turn'd
Back through the isle, and at the beach arrivèd,
I summon'd all my followers to ascend
The bark again, and cast the hawsers loose. 170
They, at my voice, embarking, fill'd in ranks
The seats, and rowing, thresh'd the hoary flood.
And now, melodious Circe, nymph divine,
Sent after us a canvas-stretching breeze,
Pleasant companion of our course, and we 175
(The decks and benches clear'd) untoiling sat,
While managed gales sped swift the bark along.
Then, with dejected heart, thus I began.
Oh friends ! (for it is needful that not one
Or two alone the admonition hear 180
Of Circe, beauteous prophetess divine,)
To all I speak, that whether we escape
Or perish, all may be at least forewarn'd.
She bids us, first, avoid the dangerous song
Of the sweet Sirens and their flowery meads. 185
Me only she permits those strains to hear ;
But ye shall bind me with coercion strong
Of cordage well-secured to the mast-foot,
And by no struggles to be loosed of mine.
But should I supplicate to be released 190

Or give such order, then, with added cords
Be it your part to bind me still the more.

Thus with distinct precaution I prepared
My people ; rapid in her course, meantime,
My gallant bark approach'd the Sirens' isle, 195
For brisk and favourable blew the wind.

Then fell the wind suddenly, and serene
A breathless calm ensued, while all around
The billows slumber'd, lull'd by power divine.
Up-sprang my people, and the folded sails 200

Bestowing in the hold, sat to their oars,
Which with their polish'd blades whiten'd the Deep.

I then, with edge of steel severing minute
A waxen cake, chafed it and moulded it
Between my palms, ere long the ductile mass 205

Grew warm, obedient to that ceaseless force,
And to Hyperion's all-pervading beams.

With that soft liniment I fill'd the ears
Of my companions, man by man, and they
My feet and arms with strong coercion bound 210
Of cordage to the mast-foot well-secured.

Then down they sat, and rowing, thresh'd the brine.
But when with rapid course we had arrived
Within such distance as a voice may reach,
Not unperceived by them the gliding bark 215
Approach'd, and thus harmonious they began.

Ulysses, Chief by every tongue extoll'd,
Achaia's boast, oh hither steer thy bark !
Here stay thy course, and listen to our lay !
These shores none passes in his sable ship 220

Till, first, the warblings of our voice he hear,
Then, happier hence and wiser he departs.
All that the Greeks endured, and all the ills
Inflicted by the Gods on Troy, we know,
Know all that passes on the boundless earth. 225

So they with voices sweet their music poured
Melodious on my ear, winning with ease
My heart's desire to listen, and by signs
I bade my people, instant, set me free.
But they incumbent row'd, and from their seats 230
Eurylochus and Perimedes sprang

With added cords to bind me still the more.
This danger past, and when the Siren's voice,
Now left remote, had lost its power to charm,
Then, my companions freeing from the wax 235
Their ears, deliver'd me from my restraint.
The island, left afar, soon I discern'd
Huge waves, and smoke, and horrid thunderings heard.
All sat aghast ; forth flew at once the oars
From every hand, and with a clash the waves 240
Smote altogether ; check'd, the galley stood,
By billow-sweeping oars no longer urged,
And I, throughout the bark, man after man
Encouraged all, addressing thus my crew.
We meet not, now, my friends, our first distress. 245
This evil is not greater than we found
When the huge Cyclops in his hollow den
Imprison'd us, yet even thence we 'scaped,
My intrepidity and fertile thought
Opening the way ; and we shall recollect 250
These dangers also, in due time, with joy.
Come then—pursue my counsel. Ye your seats
Still occupying, smite the furrow'd flood
With well-timed strokes, that by the will of Jove
We may escape, perchance, this death, secure. 255
To thee the pilot thus I speak, (my words
Mark thou, for at thy touch the rudder moves,)
This smoke, and these tumultuous waves avoid ;
Steer wide of both ; yet with an eye intent
On yonder rock, lest unaware thou hold 260
Too near a course, and plunge us into harm.
So I ; with whose advice all, quick, complied.
But Scylla I as yet named not, (that woe
Without a cure,) lest, terrified, my crew
Should all renounce their oars, and crowd below. 265
Just then, forgetful of the strict command
Of Circe not to arm, I cloth'd me all
In radiant armour, grasp'd two quivering spears,
And to the deck ascended at the prow,
Expecting earliest notice there, what time 270
The rock-bred Scylla should annoy my friends.
But I discern'd her not, nor could, although

To weariness of sight the dusky rock
I vigilant explored. Thus, many a groan
Heaving, we navigated sad the strait, 275
For here stood Scylla, while Charybdis there
With hoarse throat deep absorb'd the briny flood.
Oft as she vomited the deluge forth,
Like water cauldron'd o'er a furious fire
The whirling Deep all murmur'd, and the spray 280
On both those rocky summits fell in showers.
But when she suck'd the salt wave down again,
Then, all the pool appear'd wheeling about
Within, the rock rebellow'd, and the sea
Drawn off into that gulf disclosed to view 285
The oozy bottom. Us pale horror seized.
Thus, dreading death, with fast-set eyes we watch'd
Charybdis; meantime, Scylla from the bark
Caught six away, the bravest of my friends.
With eyes, that moment, on my ship and crew 290
Retorted, I beheld the legs and arms
Of those whom she uplifted in the air;
On me they call'd, my name, the last, last time
Pronouncing then, in agony of heart.
As when from some bold point among the rocks 295
The angler, with his taper rod in hand,
Casts forth his bait to snare the smaller fry,
He swings away remote his guarded¹ line
Then jerks his gasping prey forth from the Deep,
So Scylla them raised gasping to the rock, 300
And at her cavern's mouth devour'd them loud-
Shrieking, and stretching forth to me their arms
In sign of hopeless misery. Ne'er beheld
These eyes in all the seas that I have roam'd,
A sight so piteous, nor in all my toils. 305
From Scylla and Charybdis dire escaped,
We reach'd the noble island of the Sun
Ere long, where bright Hyperion's beauteous herds
Broad-fronted grazed, and his well-batten'd flocks.
I, in the bark and on the sea, the voice 310
Of oxen bellowing in hovels heard,

¹ They passed the line through a pipe of horn, to secure it against the fishes' bite.

And of loud bleating sheep ; then dropp'd the word
 Into my memory of the sightless Seer,
 Theban Tiresias, and the caution strict
 Of Circe, my *Ææan* monitress,
 Who with such force had caution'd me to avoid
 The island of the Sun, joy of mankind.
 Thus then to my companions, sad, I spake.

315

Hear ye, my friends ! although long time distress'd,
 The words prophetic of the Theban seer
 And of *Ææan* Circe, whose advice
 Was oft repeated to me to avoid
 This island of the Sun, joy of mankind.
 There, said the Goddess, dread your heaviest woes,
 Pass the isle, therefore, scudding swift away.

320

325

I ceased ; they me with consternation heard,
 And harshly thus *Eurylochus* replied.

Ulysses, ruthless Chief ! no toils impair
 Thy strength, of senseless iron thou art form'd,
 Who thy companions weary, and o'erwatch'd,
 Forbidd'st to disembark on this fair isle,
 Where now, at last, we might with ease regale.
 Thou, rash, command'st us, leaving it afar,
 To roam all night the Ocean's dreary waste ;
 But winds to ships injurious spring by night,
 And how shall we escape a dreadful death
 If, chance, a sudden gust from South arise
 Or stormy West, that dash in pieces oft
 The vessel, even in the Gods' despite ?
 Prepare we rather now, as night enjoins,
 Our evening fare beside the sable bark,
 In which at peep of day we may again
 Launch forth secure into the boundless flood.

330

335

340

He ceased, whom all applauded. Then I knew
 That sorrow by the will of adverse heaven
 Approach'd, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

345

I suffer force, *Eurylochus* ! and yield
 O'er-ruled by numbers. Come, then, swear ye all
 A solemn oath, that should we find an herd
 Or numerous flock, none here shall either sheep
 Or bullock slay, by appetite profane
 Seduced, but shall the viands eat content

350

Which from immortal Circe we received.

I spake ; they readily a solemn oath
Sware all, and when their oath was fully sworn, 355
Within a creek where a fresh fountain rose
They moor'd the bark, and issuing, began
Brisk preparation of their evening cheer.
But when nor hunger now nor thirst remain'd
Unsated, recollecting, then, their friends 360
By Scylla seized and at her cave devour'd,
They mourn'd, nor ceased to mourn them, till they slept.
The night's third portion come, when now the stars
Had traversed the 'mid sky, cloud-gatherer Jove
Call'd forth a vehement wind with tempest charged, 365
Menacing earth and sea with pitchy clouds
Tremendous, and the night fell dark from heaven.
But when Aurora, daughter of the day,
Look'd rosy forth, we haled, drawn inland more,
Our bark into a grot, where nymphs were wont 370
Graceful to tread the dance, or to repose.
Convening there my friends, I thus began.

My friends ! food fails us not, but bread is yet
And wine on board. Abstain we from the herds,
Lest harm ensue ; for ye behold the flocks 375
And herds of a most potent God, the Sun !
Whose eye and watchful ear none may elude.

So saying, I sway'd the generous minds of all.
A month complete the South wind ceaseless blew,
Nor other wind blew next, save East and South, 380
Yet they, while neither food nor rosy wine
Fail'd them, the herds harm'd not, through fear to die.
But, our provisions failing, they employ'd
Whole days in search of food, snaring with hooks
Birds, fishes, of what kind soe'er they might, 385
By famine urged. I solitary roam'd
Meantime the isle, seeking by prayer to move
Some God to show us a deliverance thence.
When, roving thus the isle, I had at length
Left all my crew remote, laving my hands 390
Where shelter warm I found from the rude blast,
I supplicated every Power above ;
But they my prayers answer'd with slumbers soft

Shed o'er my eyes, and with pernicious art
 Eurylochus, the while, my friends harangued. 395
 My friends ! afflicted as ye are, yet hear
 A fellow-sufferer. Death, however caused,
 Abhorrence moves in miserable man,
 But death by famine is a fate of all
 Most to be fear'd. Come—let us hither drive 400
 And sacrifice to the Immortal Powers
 The best of all the oxen of the Sun,
 Resolving thus—that soon as we shall reach
 Our native Ithaca, we will erect
 To bright Hyperion an illustrious fane, 405
 Which with magnificent and numerous gifts
 We will enrich. But should he choose to sink
 Our vessel, for his stately beeves incensed,
 And should, with him, all heaven conspire our death,
 I rather had with open mouth, at once, 410
 Meeting the billows, perish, than by slow
 And pining waste, here in this desert isle.
 So spake Eurylochus, whom all approved.
 Then, driving all the fattest of the herd
 Few paces only, (for the sacred beeves 415
 Grazed rarely distant from the bark) they stood
 Compassing them around, and grasping each
 Green foliage newly pluck'd from saplings tall,
 (For barley none in all our bark remain'd)
 Worshipp'd the Gods in prayer. Prayer made, they slew 420
 And flay'd them, and the thighs with double fat
 Investing, spread them o'er with slices crude.
 No wine had they with which to consecrate
 The blazing rites, but with libation poor
 Of water hallow'd the interior parts. 425
 Now, when the thighs were burnt, and each had shared
 His portion of the maw, and when the rest
 All slash'd and scored hung roasting at the fire,
 Sleep, in that moment, suddenly my eyes
 Forsaking, to the shore I bent my way. 430
 But ere the station of our bark I reach'd,
 The savoury steam greeted me. At the scent
 I wept aloud, and to the Gods exclaim'd.
 Oh Jupiter, and all ye Powers above !

With cruel sleep and fatal ye have lull'd 435
My cares to rest, such horrible offence
Meantime my rash companions have devised.

Then, flew long-stoled Lampetia to the Sun
At once with tidings of his slaughter'd beeves.
And he, incensed, the Immortals thus address'd. 440

Jove, and ye everlasting Powers divine !
Avenge me instant on the crew profane
Of Laertiades ; Ulysses' friends
Have dared to slay my beeves, which I with joy
Beheld, both when I climb'd the starry heavens, 445
And when to earth I sloped my "westring wheels,"
But if they yield me not amercement due
And honourable for my loss, to Hell

I will descend, and give the ghosts my beams.
Then thus the cloud-assembler God replied. 450

Sun ! shine thou still on the Immortal powers,
And on the teeming earth, frail man's abode.
My candent bolts can in a moment reach
And split their flying bark in the mid-sea.

These things Calypso told me, taught herself, 455
By herald Hermes, as she oft affirm'd.

But when, descending to the shore, I reach'd
At length my bark, with aspect stern and tone
I reprimanded them, yet no redress
Could frame or remedy—the beeves were dead. 460

Soon follow'd signs portentous sent from heaven.
The skins all crept, and on the spits the flesh
Both roast and raw bellow'd, as with the voice
Of living beeves. Thus my devoted friends
Driving the fattest oxen of the Sun, 465

Feasted six days entire ; but when the seventh
By mandate of Saturnian Jove appeared,
The storm then ceased to rage, and we, again
Embarking, launch'd our galley, rear'd the mast,
And gave our unfurl'd canvas to the wind. 470

The island left afar, and other land
Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
Hung a cœrulean cloud, darkening the Deep.
Not long my vessel ran, for blowing wild, 475

Now came shrill Zephyrus ; a stormy gust
 Snapp'd sheer the shrouds on both sides ; backward fell
 The mast, and with loose tackle strew'd the hold ;
 Striking the pilot in the stern, it crush'd
 His skull together ; he a diver's plunge 480
 Made downward, and his noble spirit fled.
 Meantime, Jove thundering, hurl'd into the ship
 His bolts ; she, smitten by the fires of Jove,
 Quaked all her length ; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
 And o'er her sides headlong my people plunged 485
 Like sea-mews, interdicted by that stroke
 Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
 But I the vessel still paced to and fro,
 Till, sever'd by the boisterous waves, her sides
 Forsook the keel now left to float alone. 490
 Snapp'd where it join'd the keel the mast had fallen,
 But fell encircled with a leathern brace,
 Which it retained ; binding with this the mast
 And keel together, on them both I sat,
 Borne helpless onward by the dreadful gale. 495
 And now the West subsided, and the South
 Arose instead, with misery charged for me,
 That I might measure back my course again
 To dire Charybdis. All night long I drove,
 And when the sun arose, at Scylla's rock 500
 Once more, and at Charybdis' gulf arrived.
 It was the time when she absorb'd profound
 The briny flood, but by a wave upborne
 I seized the branches fast of the wild-fig².
 To which, bat-like, I clung ; yet where to fix 505
 My foot secure found not, or where to ascend,
 For distant lay the roots, and distant shot
 The largest arms erect into the air,
 O'ershadowing all Charybdis ; therefore hard
 I clench'd the boughs, till she disgorged again 510
 Both keel and mast. Not undesired by me
 They came, though late ; for at what hour the judge,
 After decision made of numerous strifes³
 Between young candidates for honour, leaves

² See line 120.

³ He had therefore held by the fig-tree from sun-rise till afternoon.

The forum for refreshment' sake at home, 515
Then was it that the mast and keel emerged.
Deliver'd to a voluntary fall,
Fast by those beams I dash'd into the flood,
And seated on them both, with oary palms
Impell'd them ; nor the Sire of Gods and men 520
Permitted Scylla to discern me more,
Else had I perish'd by her fangs at last.
Nine days I floated thence, and on the tenth
Dark night, the Gods convey'd me to the isle
Ogygia, habitation of divine 525
Calypso, by whose hospitable aid
And assiduity my strength revived.
But wherefore this ? ye have already learn'd
That history, thou and thy illustrious spouse ;
I told it yesterday, and hate a tale 530
Once amply told, then, needless, traced again.

BOOK XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses having finished his narrative, and received additional presents from the Phæacians, embarks; he is conveyed in his sleep to Ithaca, and in his sleep is landed on that island. The ship that carried him is, in her return, transformed by Neptune to a rock.

Minerva meets him on the shore, enables him to recollect his country, which, till enlightened by her, he believed to be a country strange to him, and they concert together the means of destroying the suitors. The Goddess then repairs to Sparta, to call thence Telemachus, and Ulysses, by her aid disguised like a beggar, proceeds toward the cottage of Eumæus.

He ceased; the whole assembly silent sat,
Charm'd into ecstasy with his discourse
Throughout the twilight hall. Then, thus the King.

Ulysses, since beneath my brazen dome
Sublime thou hast arrived, like woes, I trust, 5
Thou shalt not in thy voyage hence sustain
By tempests tost, though much to woe inured.
To you, who daily in my palace quaff
Your princely meed of generous wine, and hear
The sacred bard, my pleasure thus I speak. 10
The robes, wrought gold, and all the other gifts
To this our guest, by the Phæacian Chiefs
Brought hither, in the sumptuous coffer lie.
But come—present ye to the stranger, each,
An ample tripod also, with a vase 15
Of smaller size, for which we will be paid
By public impost; for the charge of all
Excessive were by one alone defray'd.

So spake Alcinoüs, and his counsel pleased;
Then, all retiring, sought repose at home. 20
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, each hasted to the bark

With his illustrious present, which the might
 Of King Alcinoüs, who himself her sides
 Ascended, safe beneath the seats bestowed, 25
 Lest it should harm or hinder, while he toil'd
 In rowing, some Phæacian of the crew.
 The palace of Alcinoüs seeking next,
 Together, they prepared a new regale.

For them, in sacrifice, the 'sacred might 30
 Of King Alcinoüs slew an ox to Jove
 Saturnian, cloud-girt governor of all.
 The thighs with fire prepared, all glad partook
 The noble feast; meantime the bard divine
 Sang, sweet Demodocus, the people's joy. 35
 But oft Ulysses to the radiant sun
 Turn'd wistful eyes, anxious for his decline,
 Nor longer, now, patient of dull delay.
 As when some hungry swain whose sable beeves
 Have through the fallow dragg'd his ponderous plough 40
 All day, the setting sun views with delight
 For supper' sake, which with tired feet he seeks,
 So welcome to Ulysses' eyes appear'd
 The sun-set of that eve; directing, then,
 His speech to maritime Phæacia's sons, 45
 But to Alcinoüs chiefly, thus he said.

Alcinoüs, o'er Phæacia's realm supreme!
 Libation made, dismiss ye me in peace,
 And farewell all! for what I wish'd, I have,
 Conductors hence, and honourable gifts 50
 With which heaven prosper me! and may the Gods
 Vouchsafe to me, at my return, to find
 All safe, my spotless consort and my friends!
 May ye, whom here I leave, gladden your wives
 And see your children blest, and may the Powers 55
 Immortal with all good enrich you all,
 And from calamity preserve the land!

He ended; they unanimous, his speech
 Applauded loud, and bade dismiss the guest
 Who had so wisely spoken and so well. 60
 Then thus Alcinoüs to his herald spake.

Pontonoüs! charging high the beaker, bear

¹ *Ἱερὸν μένος Ἀλκινόοιο.*

To every guest beneath our roof the wine,
That, prayer preferred to the eternal Sire,
We may dismiss our inmate to his home. 65

Then bore Pontonoüs to every guest
The brimming cup ; they, where they sat, perform'd
Libation due ; but the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, from his seat arising, placed
A massy goblet in Areta's hand, 70
To whom in accents wing'd, grateful, he said.

Farewell, O Queen, a long farewell, till age
Arrive, and death, the appointed lot of all !
I go ; but be this people, and the King
Alcinoüs, and thy progeny, thy joy 75
Yet many a year beneath this glorious roof !

So saying, the Hero through the palace-gate
Issued, whom, by Alcinoüs' command,
The royal herald to his vessel led.
Three maidens also of Areta's train 80

His steps attended ; one, the robe well-bleach'd
And tunic bore ; the corded coffer, one ;
And food the third, with wine of crimson hue.
Arriving where the galley rode, each gave
Her charge to some brave mariner on board, 85
And all was safely stow'd. Meantime were spread
Linen and arras on the deck astern,

For his secure repose. And now the Chief
Himself embarking, silent laid him down.
Then every rower to his bench repair'd ; 90
They drew the loosen'd cable from its hold
In the drill'd rock, and resupine, at once
With lusty strokes upturn'd the flashing waves.

His eye-lids soon sleep, falling as a dew,
Closed fast, death's simular, in sight the same. 95
She, as four harness'd stallions o'er the plain
Shooting together at the scourge's stroke,
Toss high their manes, and rapid scour along,
So mounted she the waves, while dark the flood
Roll'd after her of the resounding Deep. 100

Steady she ran and safe, passing in speed
The falcon, swiftest of the fowls of heaven ;
With such rapidity she cut the waves,

An Hero bearing like the Gods above
In wisdom, one familiar long with woe 105
In fight sustain'd, and on the perilous flood,
Though sleeping now serenely, and resign'd
To sweet oblivion of all sorrow past.
The brightest star of heaven, precursor chief
Of day-spring, now arose, when at the isle 110
(Her voyage soon perform'd) the bark arrived.
There is a port sacred in Ithaca
To Phorcys, hoary ancient of the Deep,
Form'd by converging shores, prominent both
And both abrupt, which from the spacious bay 115
Exclude all boisterous winds ; within it, ships
(The port once gain'd) uncabled ride secure.
An olive, at the haven's head, expands
Her branches wide, near to a pleasant cave
Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named 120
The Naiads. In that cave beakers of stone
And jars are seen ; bees lodge their honey there ;
And there, on slender spindles of the rock
The nymphs of rivers weave their wondrous robes.
Perennial springs water it, and it shows 125
A twofold entrance ; ingress one affords
To mortal man, which Northward looks direct,
But holier is the Southern far ; by that
No mortal enters, but the Gods alone.
Familiar with that port before, they push'd 130
The vessel in ; she, rapid, plough'd the sands
With half her keel, such rowers urged her on.
Descending from the well-bench'd bark ashore,
They lifted forth Ulysses first, with all
His splendid couch complete, then laid him down, 135
Still wrapt in balmy slumber, on the sands.
His treasures next, by the Phæacian Chiefs
At his departure given him as the meed
Due to his wisdom, at the olive's foot
They heap'd, without the road, lest while he slept 140
Some passing traveller should rifle them.
Then homeward thence they sped. Nor Ocean's God
His threats forgot denounced against divine
Ulysses, but with Jove thus first advised.

- Eternal Sire! I shall no longer share 145
 Respect and reverence among the Gods,
 Since now Phæacia's mortal race have ceased
 To honour me, though from myself derived.
 It was my purpose, that by many an ill
 Harass'd, Ulysses should have reach'd his home, 150
 Although to intercept him, whose return
 Thyself had promised, ne'er was my intent.
 But him fast-sleeping swiftly o'er the waves
 They have conducted, and have set him down
 In Ithaca, with countless gifts enrich'd, 155
 With brass, and tissued raiment, and with gold;
 Much treasure! more than he had home convey'd
 Even had he arrived with all his share
 Allotted to him of the spoils of Troy.
 To whom the cloud-assembler God replied. 160
 What hast thou spoken, Shaker of the shores,
 Wide-ruling Neptune? Fear not; thee the Gods
 Will ne'er despise; dangerous were the deed
 To cast dishonour on a God by birth
 More ancient, and more potent far than they. 165
 But if, profanely rash, a mortal man
 Should dare to slight thee, to avenge the wrong
 Some future day is ever in thy power.
 Accomplish all thy pleasure, thou art free.
 Him answer'd then the Shaker of the shores. 170
 Jove cloud-enthroned! that pleasure I would soon
 Perform as thou hast said, but that I watch
 Thy mind continual, fearful to offend.
 My purpose is, now to destroy amid
 The dreary Deep yon fair Phæacian bark, 175
 Return'd from safe conveyance of her freight;
 So shall they waft such wanderers home no more,
 And she shall hide their city, to a rock
 Transform'd of mountainous o'ershadowing size.
 Him then Jove answer'd, gatherer of the clouds. 180
 Perform it, O my brother, and the deed
 Thus done, shall best be done;—What time the people
 Shall from the city her approach descry,
 Fix her to stone transform'd, but still in shape
 A gallant bark, near to the coast, that all 185

May wonder, seeing her transform'd to stone
Of size to hide their city from the view.

These words once heard, the Shaker of the shores
Instant to Scheria, maritime abode
Of the Phæacians, went. Arrived, he watch'd. 190
And now the flying bark full near approach'd,
When Neptune, meeting her, with outspread palm
Depress'd her at a stroke, and she became
Deep-rooted stone. Then Neptune went his way.
Phæacia's ship-ennobled sons meantime 195
Conferring stood, and thus in accents wing'd,
The amazed spectator to his fellow spake.

Ah! who hath sudden check'd the vessel's course
Homeward? This moment she was all in view.

Thus they, unconscious of the cause, to whom 200
Alcinoüs, instructing them, replied.

Ye Gods! a prophecy now strikes my mind
With force, my father's. He was wont to say—
Neptune resents it, that we safe conduct
Natives of every region to their home. 205
He also spake, prophetic, of a day
When a Phæacian gallant bark, return'd
After conveyance of a stranger hence,
Should perish in the dreary Deep, and changed
To a huge mountain, cover all the town. 210

So spake my father, all whose words we see
This day fulfill'd. Thus, therefore, act we all
Unanimous; henceforth no longer bear
The stranger home, when such shall here arrive;
And we will sacrifice, without delay, 215
Twelve chosen bulls to Neptune, if, perchance,
He will commiserate us, and forbear
To hide our town behind a mountain's height.

He spake, they, terrified, the bulls prepared.
Thus all Phæacia's Senators and Chiefs 220
His altar compassing, in prayer adored
The Ocean's God. Meantime Ulysses woke,
Unconscious where; stretch'd on his native soil
He lay, and knew it not, long time exiled.
For Pallas, progeny of Jove, a cloud 225
Drew dense around him, that ere yet agnized

By others, he might wisdom learn from her,
Neither to citizens, nor yet to friends
Reveal'd, nor even to his own espoused,
Till, first, he should avenge complete his wrongs 230
Domestic from those suitors proud sustain'd.
All objects, therefore, in the Hero's eyes
Seem'd alien, foot-paths long, commodious ports,
Heaven-climbing rocks, and trees of amplest growth.
Arising, fixt he stood, his native soil 235
Contemplating, till with expanded palms
Both thighs he smote, and plaintive thus began.
Ah me ! what mortal race inhabits here ?
Rude are they, contumacious and unjust,
Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods ? 240
Where now shall I secrete these numerous stores ?
Where wander I, myself ? I would that still
Phæacians own'd them, and I had arrived
In the dominions of some other King
Magnanimous, who would have entertain'd 245
And sent me to my native home secure !
Now, neither know I where to place my wealth,
Nor can I leave it here, lest it become
Another's prey. Alas ! Phæacia's Chiefs
Not altogether wise I deem or just, 250
Who have misplaced me in another land,
Promised to bear me to the pleasant shores
Of Ithaca, but have not so perform'd.
Jove, guardian of the suppliant's rights, who all
Transgressors marks, and punishes all wrong, 255
Avenge me on the treacherous race !—but hold—
I will revise my stores, so shall I know
If they have left me here of aught despoil'd.
So saying, he number'd carefully the gold,
The vases, tripods bright, and tissued robes, 260
But nothing miss'd of all. Then he bewail'd
His native isle, with pensive steps and slow
Pacing the border of the billowy flood,
Forlorn ; but while he wept, Pallas approach'd,
In form a shepherd stripling, girlish fair 265
In feature, such as are the sons of Kings ;
A sumptuous mantle o'er his shoulders hung

Twice-folded, sandals his nice feet upbore,
 And a smooth javelin glitter'd in his hand.
 Ulysses, joyful at the sight, his steps
 Turn'd brisk toward her, whom he thus address'd. 270

Sweet youth! since thee, of all mankind, I first
 Encounter in this land unknown, all hail!
 Come not with purposes of harm to me!
 These save, and save me also. I prefer 275
 To thee, as to some God, my prayer, and clasp
 Thy knees a suppliant. Say, and tell me true,
 What land? what people? who inhabit here?
 Is this some isle delightful, or a shore
 Of fruitful main-land sloping to the sea? 280

Then Pallas thus, Goddess cœrulean-eyed.
 Stranger! thou sure art simple, or hast dwelt
 Far distant hence, if of this land thou ask.
 It is not, trust me, of so little note,
 But known to many, both to those who dwell 285
 Toward the sun-rise, and to others placed
 Behind it, distant in the dusky West.
 Rugged it is, not yielding level course
 To the swift steed, and yet no barren spot,
 However small, but rich in wheat and wine; 290
 Nor wants it rain or fertilizing dew,
 But pasture green to goats and beeves affords,
 Trees of all kinds, and fountains never dry.
 Ithaca therefore, stranger, is a name
 Known even at Troy, a city, by report, 295
 At no small distance from Achaia's shore.

The Goddess ceased; then, toil-enduring Chief
 Ulysses, happy in his native land,
 (So taught by Pallas, progeny of Jove)
 In accents wing'd her answering, utter'd prompt 300
 Not truth, but figments to truth opposite,
 For guile in him stood never at a pause.

O'er yonder flood, even in spacious² Crete
 I heard of Ithaca, where now, it seems,
 I have myself with these my stores arrived; 305

² Homer dates all the fictions of Ulysses from Crète, as if he meant to pass a similar censure on the Cretans to that quoted by St. Paul—Κρητες αει ψευται.

Not richer stores than, flying thence, I left
 To my own children ; for from Crete I fled
 For slaughter of Orsilochus the swift,
 Son of Idomeneus, whom none in speed
 Could equal throughout all that spacious isle. 310
 His purpose was to plunder me of all
 My Trojan spoils, which to obtain much woe
 I had in battle and by storms endured,
 For that I would not gratify his Sire,
 Fighting beside him in the fields of Troy, 315
 But led a different band. Him from the field
 Returning homeward, with my brazen spear
 I smote, in ambush waiting his return
 At the road-side, with a confederate friend.
 Unwonted darkness over all the heavens 320
 That night prevailed, nor any eye of man
 Observed us, but unseen I slew the youth.
 No sooner then with my sharp spear of life
 I had bereft him, than I sought a ship
 Mann'd by renown'd Phæacians, whom with gifts 325
 Part of my spoils, and by requests, I won.
 I bade them land me on the Pylian shore,
 Or in fair Elis by the Epeans ruled ;
 But they, reluctant, were by violent winds
 Driven devious thence, for fraud they purposed none. 330
 Thus through constraint we here arrived by night,
 And with much difficulty push'd the ship
 Into safe harbour, nor was mention made
 Of food by any, though all needed food,
 But disembark'd in haste, on shore we lay. 335
 I, weary, slept profound, and they my goods
 Forth heaving from the bark, beside me placed
 The treasures on the sea-beach, where I slept,
 Then reimbarking, to the populous coast
 Steer'd of Sidonia, and me left forlorn. 340
 He ceased ; then smiled Minerva azure-eyed
 And stroked his cheek, in form a woman now,
 Beauteous, majestic, in all elegant arts
 Accomplish'd, and with accents wing'd replied.
 Who passes thee in artifice well-framed 345
 And in imposture various, need shall find

Of all his policy, although a God.
 Canst thou not cease, inventive as thou art
 And subtle, from the wiles which thou hast loved
 Since thou wast infant, and from tricks of speech 350
 Delusive, even in thy native land ?
 But come, dismiss we these ingenious shifts
 From our discourse, in which we both excel ;
 For thou of all men in expedients most
 Abound'st and eloquence, and I, throughout 355
 All heaven have praise for wisdom and for art.
 And know'st thou not thine Athenæan aid,
 Pallas, Jove's daughter, who in all thy toils
 Assist thee and defend ? I gave thee power
 To engage the hearts of all Phæacia's sons, 360
 And here arrive even now, counsels to frame
 Discreet with thee, and to conceal the stores
 Given to thee by the rich Phæacian Chiefs
 On my suggestion, at thy going thence.
 I will inform thee also what distress 365
 And hardship under thy own palace-roof
 Thou must endure ; which since constraint enjoins,
 Bear patiently, and neither man apprise
 Nor woman that thou hast arrived forlorn
 And vagabond, but silent undergo 370
 What wrongs soever from the hands of men.
 To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
 O Goddess ! thou art able to elude,
 Wherever met, the keenest eye of man,
 For thou all shapes assumest ; yet this I know 375
 Certainly, that I ever found thee kind,
 Long as Achaia's Heroes fought at Troy ;
 But when (the lofty towers of Priam laid
 In dust) we re-embark'd, and by the will
 Of heaven Achaia's fleet was scatter'd wide, 380
 Thenceforth, O daughter wise of Jove, I thee
 Saw not, nor thy appearance in my ship
 Once mark'd, to rid me of my numerous woes,
 But always bearing in my breast a heart
 With anguish riven, I roam'd, till by the Gods 385
 Relieved at length, and till with gracious words
 Thyself didst in Phæacia's opulent land

Confirm my courage, and becamest my guide.
But I adjure thee in thy father's name—
O tell me truly, (for I cannot hope
That I have reach'd fair Ithaca ; I tread
Some other soil, and thou affirm'st it mine
To mock me merely, and deceive,) oh say—
Am I in Ithaca ? in truth, at home ?

390

Thus then Minerva the cœrulean-eyed.
Such caution ever in thy breast prevails
Distrustful ; but I know thee eloquent,
With wisdom and with ready thought endued,
And cannot leave thee therefore thus distress'd.
For what man, save Ulysses, new-return'd
After long wanderings, would not pant to see
At once his home, his children, and his wife ?
But thou prefer'st neither to know nor ask
Concerning them, till some experience first
Thou make of her whose wasted youth is spent
In barren solitude, and who in tears
Ceaseless her nights and woful days consumes.
I ne'er was ignorant, but well foreknew
That not till after loss of all thy friends
Thou should'st return ; but loth I was to oppose
Neptune, my father's brother, sore incensed
For his son's sake, deprived of sight by thee.
But I will give thee proof—come now—survey
These marks of Ithaca, and be convinced.

395

400

405

410

This is the port of Phorcys, sea-born sage ;
That, the huge olive at the haven's head ;
Fast by it, thou behold'st the pleasant cove
Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named
The Naiads ; this the broad-arch'd cavern is
Where thou wast wont to offer to the nymphs
Many a whole hecatomb ; and yonder stands
The mountain Neritus with forests clothed.

415

420

So saying, the Goddess scatter'd from before
His eyes all darkness, and he knew the land.
Then felt Ulysses, Hero toil-inured,
Transport unutterable, seeing plain
Once more his native isle. He kiss'd the glebe,
And with uplifted hands the nymphs adored.

425

Nymphs, Naiads, Jove's own daughters ! I despair'd
To see you more, whom yet with happy vows 430
I now can hail again. Gifts, as of old,
We will hereafter at your shrines present,
If Jove-born Pallas, huntress of the spoils,
Grant life to me, and manhood to my son.

Then Pallas, blue-eyed progeny of Jove. 435
Take courage ; trouble not thy mind with thoughts
Now needless. Haste—delay not—far within
This hallow'd cave's recess place we at once
Thy precious stores, that they may thine remain,
Then muse together on thy wisest course. 440

So saying, the Goddess enter'd deep the cave
Caliginous, and its secret nooks explored
From side to side ; meantime Ulysses brought
All his stores into it, the gold, the brass,
And robes magnificent, his gifts received 445
From the Phæacians ; safe he lodged them all,
And Pallas, daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd,
Closed fast, herself, the cavern with a stone.

Then, on the consecrated olive's root
Both seated, they in consultation plann'd 450
The deaths of those injurious suitors proud,
And Pallas, blue-eyed Goddess, thus began.

Laertes' noble son, Ulysses ! think
By what means likeliest thou shalt assail
Those shameless suitors, who have now control'd 455
Three years thy family, thy matchless wife
With language amorous and with spousal gifts
Urging importunate ; but she, with tears
Watching thy wish'd return, hope gives to all
By messages of promise sent to each, 460
Framing far other purposes the while.

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Ah, Agamemnon's miserable fate
Had surely met me in my own abode,
But for thy gracious warning, power divine ! 465
Come then—Devise the means ; teach me, thyself,
The way to vengeance, and my soul inspire
With daring fortitude, as when we loosed
Her radiant frontlet from the brows of Troy.

Would'st thou with equal zeal, O Pallas! aid 470
 Thy servant here, I would encounter thrice
 An hundred enemies, let me but perceive
 Thy dread divinity my prompt ally.

Him answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
 And such I will be; not unmark'd by me, 475
 (Let once our time of enterprize arrive)
 Shalt thou assail them. Many, as I judge,
 Of those proud suitors who devour thy wealth
 Shall leave their brains then on thy palace-floor.
 But come. Behold! I will disguise thee so 480
 That none shall know thee; I will parch the skin
 On thy fair body; I will cause thee shed
 Thy wavy locks; I will enfold thee round
 In such a kirtle as the eyes of all
 Shall loathe to look on; and I will deform 485
 With blurring rheums thy eyes, so vivid erst;
 So shall the suitors deem thee, and thy wife,
 And thy own son whom thou didst leave at home,
 Some sordid wretch obscure. But seek thou first
 Thy swine-herd's mansion; he, alike, intends 490
 Thy good, and loves affectionate thy son
 And thy Penelope; thou shalt find the swain
 Tending his herd; they feed beneath the rock
 Corax, at side of Arethusa's fount,
 On acorns dieted, nutritious food 495
 To them, and drinking of the limpid stream.
 There waiting, question him of thy concerns,
 While I from Sparta praised for women fair
 Call home thy son Telemachus, a guest
 With Menelaus now, whom to consult 500
 In spacious Lacedæmon he is gone,
 Anxious to learn if yet his father lives.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 And why, alas! all-knowing as thou art,
 Him left'st thou ignorant? was it that he, 505
 He also, wand'ring wide the barren Deep,
 Might suffer woe, while these devour his wealth?

Him answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
 Grieve thou not much for him. I sent him forth
 Myself, that there arrived, he might acquire 510

Honour and fame. No sufferings finds he there,
But in Atrides' palace safe resides,
Enjoying all abundance. Him, in truth,
The suitors watch close ambush'd on the Deep,
Intent to slay him ere he reach his home,
But shall not as I judge, till of themselves
The earth hide some who make thee, now, a prey.

515

So saying, the Goddess touch'd him with a wand.
At once o'er all his agile limbs she parch'd
The polish'd skin ; she wither'd to the root
His wavy locks, and clothed him with the hide
Deform'd of wrinkled age ; she-charged with rheums
His eyes before so vivid, and a cloak
And kirtle gave him, tatter'd both, and foul,
And smutch'd with smoke ; then casting over all
An huge old deer-skin bald, with a long staff
She furnish'd him, and with a wallet patch'd
On all sides, dangling by a twisted thong.

520

525

Thus all their plan adjusted, different ways
They took, and she, seeking Ulysses' son,
To Lacedæmon's spacious realm repair'd.

530

BOOK XIV.

A R G U M E N T.

Ulysses arriving at the house of Eumæus, is hospitably entertained, and spends the night there.

LEAVING the haven-side, he turn'd his steps
 Into a rugged path, which over hills
 Mantled with trees led him to the abode
 By Pallas mention'd of his noble¹ friend
 The swine-herd, who of all Ulysses' train
 Watch'd with most diligence his rural stores. 5
 Him sitting in the vestibule he found
 Of his own airy lodge commodious, built
 Amidst a level lawn. That structure neat
 Eumæus, in the absence of his Lord, 10
 Had raised, himself, with stones from quarries hewn,
 Unaided by Laertes or the Queen.
 With tangled thorns he fenced it safe around,
 And with contiguous stakes riven from the trunks
 Of solid oak black-grain'd hemm'd it without. 15
 Twelve pens he made within, all side by side,
 Lairs for his swine, and fast-immured in each
 Lay fifty pregnant females on the floor.
 The males all slept without, less numerous far,
 Thinn'd by the princely wooers at their feasts 20
 Continual, for to them he ever sent
 The fattest of his saginated charge.
 Three hundred, still, and sixty brawns remained.
 Four mastiffs in adjoining kennels lay,
 Resembling wild-beasts, nourish'd at the board 25
 Of the illustrious steward of the styes.

¹ Δῖος ὑφορβος.—The swine-herd's was therefore in those days, and in that country, an occupation honourable as well as useful. Barnes deems the epithet *δῖος* significant of his noble birth. Vide Clarke in loco.

Himself sat fitting sandals to his feet,
Carved from a stain'd ox-hide. Four hinds he kept,
Now busied here and there; three in the pens
Were occupied; meantime, the fourth had sought 30
The city, whither, for the suitors' use,
With no good-will, but by constraint, he drove
A boar, that sacrificing to the Gods,
The imperious guests might on his flesh regale.

Soon as those clamorous watch-dogs the approach 35
Saw of Ulysses, baying loud, they ran
Toward him; he, as ever, well-advised,
Squatted, and let his staff fall from his hand.
Yet foul indignity he had endured
Even there, at his own farm, but that the swain, 40
Following his dogs in haste, sprang through the porch
To his assistance, letting fall the hide.
With chiding voice and vollied stones he soon
Drove them apart, and thus his Lord bespake.

Old man! one moment more, and these my dogs 45
Had, past doubt, worried thee, who should'st have proved,
So slain, a source of obloquy to me.
But other pangs the Gods, and other woes
To me have given, who here lamenting sit
My godlike master, and his fatted swine 50
Nourish for others' use, while he, perchance,
A wanderer in some foreign city seeks
Fit sustenance, and none obtains, if still
Indeed he live, and view the light of day.
But, old friend! follow me into the house, 55
That thou, at least, with plenteous food refresh'd,
And cheer'd with wine sufficient, may'st disclose
Both who thou art, and all that thou hast borne.

So saying, the generous swine-herd introduced
Ulysses, and thick bundles spread of twigs 60
Beneath him, cover'd with the shaggy skin
Of a wild goat, of which he made his couch
Easy and large; the Hero, so received,
Rejoiced, and thus his gratitude express'd.

Jove grant thee and the Gods above, my host, 65
For such beneficence thy chief desire!

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.

- My guest ! I should offend, treating with scorn
 The stranger, though a poorer should arrive
 Than even thyself ; for all the poor that are, 70
 And all the strangers are the care of Jove.
 Little, and with good will, is all that lies
 Within my scope ; no man can much expect
 From servants living in continual fear
 Under young masters ; for the Gods, no doubt, 75
 Have intercepted my own Lord's return,
 From whom great kindness I had, else, received,
 With such a recompense as servants gain
 From generous masters, house and competence,
 And lovely wife from many a wooer won, 80
 Whose industry should have requited well
 His goodness, with such blessing from the Gods
 As now attends me in my present charge.
 Much had I, therefore, prosper'd, had my Lord
 Grown old at home ; but he hath died.—I would 85
 That the whole house of Helen, one and all,
 Might perish too, for she hath many slain
 Who, like my master, went glory to win
 For Agamemnon in the fields of Troy.
- So saying, he girdled, quick, his tunic close, 90
 And issuing, sought the styes ; thence bringing two
 Of the imprison'd herd, he slaughter'd both,
 Singed them, and slash'd and spitted them, and placed
 The whole well-roasted banquet, spits and all,
 Reeking before Ulysses ; last with flour 95
 He sprinkled them, and filling with rich wine
 His ivy goblet, to his master sat
 Opposite, whom inviting thus he said.
- Now, eat my guest ! such as a servant may
 I set before thee, neither large of growth 100
 Nor fat ; the fatted—those the suitors eat,
 Fearless of heaven, and pitiless of man.
 Yet deeds unjust as theirs the blessed Gods
 Love not ; they honour equity and right.
 Even an hostile band when they invade 105
 A foreign shore, which by consent of Jove
 They plunder, and with laden ships depart,
 Even they with terrors quake of wrath divine.

But these are wiser ; these must sure have learn'd
From some true oracle my master's death, 110
Who neither deign with decency to woo,
Nor yet to seek their homes, but boldly waste
His substance, shameless now, and sparing nought.
Jove ne'er hath given us yet the night or day
When with a single victim, or with two 115
They would content them, and his empty jars
Witness how fast the squanderers use his wine.
Time was when he was rich indeed ; such wealth
No Hero own'd on yonder continent,
Nor yet in Ithaca ; no twenty Chiefs 120
Could match with all their treasures his alone ;
I tell thee their amount. Twelve herds of his
The mainland² graze ; as many flocks of sheep ;
As many droves of swine ; and hirelings there
And servants of his own feed for his use, 125
As many numerous flocks of goats ; his goats
(Not fewer than eleven numerous flocks)
Here also graze the margin of his fields
Under the eye of servants well-approved,
And every servant, every day, brings home 130
The goat of all his flock largest and best.
But as for me, I have these swine in charge,
Of which, selected with exactest care
From all the herd, I send the prime to them.

He ceased : meantime Ulysses ate and drank 135
Voracious, meditating, mute, the death
Of those proud suitors. His repast, at length,
Concluded, and his appetite sufficed,
Eumæus gave him, charged with wine, the cup
From which he drank himself ; he, glad, received 140
The boon, and in wing'd accents thus began.

My friend, and who was he, wealthy and brave
As thou describest the Chief, who purchased thee ?
Thou say'st he perish'd for the glory-sake
Of Agamemnon. Name him ; I, perchance, 145
May have beheld the Hero. None can say

² It may be proper to suggest that Ulysses was lord of part of the continent opposite to Ithaca ; viz., of the peninsula Nericus or Leuca, which afterward became an island, and is now called Santa Maura. F.

But Jove and the inhabitants of heaven
That I ne'er saw him, and may not impart
News of him ; I have roam'd through many a clime.

To whom the noble swineherd thus replied. 150

Alas, old man ! no traveller's tale of him
Will gain his consort's credence, or his son's ;
For wanderers, wanting entertainment, forge
Falsehoods for bread, and wilfully deceive. 155

No wanderer lands in Ithaca, but he seeks
With feign'd intelligence my mistress' ear ;
She welcomes all, and while she questions each
Minutely, from her lids lets fall the tear
Affectionate, as well beseems a wife
Whose mate hath perished in a distant land. 160

Thou could'st thyself, no doubt, my hoary friend !
(Would any furnish thee with decent vest
And mantle) fabricate a tale with ease ;
Yet sure it is that dogs and fowls, long since,
His skin have stript, or fishes of the Deep 165
Have eaten him, and on some distant shore
Whelm'd in deep sands his mouldering bones are laid.

So hath he perish'd ; whence to all his friends,
But chiefly to myself, sorrow of heart ;
For such another Lord, gentle as he, 170

Wherever sought, I have no hope to find,
Though I should wander even to the house
Of my own father. Neither yearns my heart
So feelingly (though that desiring too)
To see once more my parents and my home, 175
As to behold Ulysses yet again.

Ah stranger ! absent as he is, his name
Fills me with reverence, for he loved me much,
Cared for me much, and though we meet no more,
Holds still an elder brother's part in me. 180

Him answer'd then, the Hero toil-inured.
My friend ! since his return, in thy account,
Is an event impossible, and thy mind
Always incredulous that hope rejects,
I shall not slightly speak, but with an oath.— 185
Ulysses comes again ; and I demand
No more, than that the boon such news deserves,

Be given me soon as he shall reach his home.
Then give me vest and mantle fit for wear,
Which, ere that hour, much as I need them both, 190
I neither ask, nor will accept from thee.
For him whom poverty can force aside
From truth—I hate him as the gates of hell.
Be Jove, of all in heaven, my witness first,
Then, this thy hospitable board, and last, 195
The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
Himself, Ulysses, to whose gates I go,
'That all my words shall surely be fulfill'd.
In this same year Ulysses shall arrive,
Ere, this month closed, another month succeed, 200
He shall return, and punish all who dare
Insult his consort and his noble son.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Old friend! that boon thou ne'er wilt earn from me;
Ulysses comes no more. But thou thy wine 205
Drink quietly, and let us find, at length,
Some other theme; recall not this again
To my remembrance, for my soul is grieved
Oft as reminded of my honour'd Lord.
Let the oath rest, and let Ulysses come 210
Even as myself, and as Penelope,
And as his ancient father, and his son
Godlike Telemachus, all wish he may.
Ay—there I feel again—nor cease to mourn
His son Telemachus; who, when the Gods 215
Had given him growth like a young plant, and I
Well hoped that nought inferior he should prove
In person or in mind to his own sire,
Hath lost, through influence human or divine,
I know not how, his sober intellect, 220
And after tidings of his sire is gone
To far-famed Pylus; his return, meantime,
In ambush hidden the proud suitors wait,
That the whole house may perish of renown'd
Arcesias, named in Ithaca no more. 225
But whether he have fallen or 'scaped, let him
Rest also, whom Saturnian Jove protect!
But come, my ancient guest! now let me learn

Thy own afflictions ; answer me in truth.
 Who, and whence art thou ? in what city born ? 230
 Where dwell thy parents ? in what kind of ship
 Camest thou ? the mariners, why brought they thee
 To Ithaca ? and of what land are they ?
 For that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.

Him answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise. 235
 I will with truth resolve thee ; and if here
 Within thy cottage sitting, we had wine
 And food for many a day, and business none
 But to regale at ease while others toil'd,
 I could exhaust the year complete, my woes 240
 Rehearsing, nor at last, rehearse entire
 My sorrows by the will of heaven sustain'd.

I boast me sprung from ancestry renown'd
 In spacious Crete ; son of a wealthy sire,
 Who other sons train'd numerous in his house, 245
 Born of his wedded wife : but he begat
 Me on his purchased concubine, whom yet
 Dear as his other sons in wedlock born
 Castor Hylacides esteem'd and loved,
 For him I boast my father. Him in Crete, 250
 While yet he lived, all revered as a God,
 So rich, so prosperous, and so blest was he
 With sons of highest praise. But death, the doom
 Of all, him bore to Pluto's drear abode,
 And his illustrious sons among themselves 255
 Portion'd his goods by lot ; to me, indeed,
 They gave a dwelling, and but little more ;
 Yet, for my virtuous qualities, I won
 A wealthy bride, for I was neither vain
 Nor base, forlorn as thou perceivest me now. 260
 But thou canst guess, I judge, viewing the straw
 What once was in the ear. Ah ! I have borne
 Much tribulation ; heap'd and heavy woes.
 Courage and phalanx-breaking might had I
 From Mars and Pallas ; at what time I drew 265
 (Planning some dread exploit) an ambush forth
 Of our most valiant Chiefs, no boding fears
 Of death seized *me*, but foremost far of all
 I sprang to fight, and pierced the flying foe.

Such was I once in arms. But household toils
Sustain'd for children's sake, and carking cares
To enrich a family, were not for me.
My pleasures were the gallant bark, the din
Of battle, the smooth spear and glittering shaft,
Objects of dread to others, but which me
The Gods disposed to love and to enjoy.
Thus different minds are differently amused ;
For ere Achaia's fleet had sail'd to Troy,
Nine times was I commander of an host
Embark'd against a foreign foe, and found
In all those enterprises great success.
From the whole booty, first, what pleased me most
Choosing, and sharing also much by lot
I rapidly grew rich, and had thenceforth
Among the Cretans reverence and respect.
But when loud-thundering Jove that voyage dire
Ordain'd, which loosed the knees of many a Greek,
Then to Idomeneus and me they gave
The charge of all their fleet, which how to avoid
We found not, so importunate the cry
Of the whole host impell'd us to the task.
There fought we nine long years, and in the tenth
(Priam's proud city pillaged) steer'd again
Our galleys homeward, which the Gods dispersed.
Then was it that deep-planning Jove devised
For me much evil. One short month, no more,
I gave to joys domestic, in my wife
Happy, and in my babes, and in my wealth,
When the desire seized me with several ships
Well-rigg'd, and furnish'd all with gallant crews,
To sail for Egypt ; nine I fitted forth,
To which stout mariners assembled fast.
Six days the chosen partners of my voyage
Feasted, to whom I numerous victims gave
For sacrifice, and for their own regale.
Embarking on the seventh from spacious Crete,
Before a clear breeze prosperous from the North
We glided easily along, as down
A river's stream ; nor one of all my ships
Damage incurr'd, but healthy and at ease

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We sat, while gales well-managed urged us on.
The fifth day thence, smooth-flowing Nile we reach'd,
And safe I moor'd in the Egyptian stream.
Then, charging all my mariners to keep
Strict watch for preservation of the ships, 315
I order'd spies into the hill-tops ; but they
Under the impulse of a spirit rash
And hot for quarrel, the well-cultured fields
Pillaged of the Egyptians, captive led
Their wives and little ones, and slew the men. 320
Soon was the city alarm'd, and at the cry
Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
With horse and foot, and with the gleam of arms
Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
Struck all my people ; none found courage more 325
To stand, for mischief swarm'd on every side.
There, numerous by the glittering spear we fell
Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
Alive to servitude. But Jove himself
My bosom with this thought inspired, (I would 330
That, dying, I had first fulfill'd my fate
In Egypt, for new woes were yet to come!)
Loosing my brazen casque, and slipping off
My buckler, there I left them on the field,
Then cast my spear away, and seeking, next, 335
The chariot of the sovereign, clasp'd his knees,
And kiss'd them. He, by my submission moved,
Deliver'd me, and to his chariot-seat
Raising, convey'd me weeping to his home
With many an ashen spear his warriors sought 340
To slay me, (for they now grew fiery-wroth)
But he through fear of hospitable Jove,
Chief punisher of wrong, saved me alive.
Seven years I there abode, and much amass'd
Among the Egyptians, gifted by them all ; 345
But, in the eighth revolving year, arrived
A shrewd Phœnician, in all fraud adept,
Hungry, and who had numerous harm'd before,
By whom I also was cajoled, and lured
To attend him to Phœnicia, where his house 350
And his possessions lay ; there I abode

A year complete his inmate ; but (the days
And months accomplish'd of the rolling year,
And the new seasons entering on their course)
To Libya then, on board his bark, by wiles 355
He won me with him, partner of the freight
Profess'd, but destined secretly to sale,
That he might profit largely by my price.
Not unsuspicious, yet constrain'd to go,
With this man I embark'd. A cloudless gale 360
Propitious blowing from the North, our ship
Ran right before it through the middle sea,
In the offing over Crete ; but adverse Jove
Destruction plann'd for them and death the while.
For, Crete now left afar, and other land 365
Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
A cloud cœrulean hung, darkening the Deep.
Then thundering oft, he hurl'd into the bark
His bolts ; she smitten by the fires of Jove, 370
Quaked all her length ; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
And o'er her sides precipitated, plunged
Like gulls the crew, forbidden by that stroke
Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
But Jove himself, when I had cast away 375
All hope of life, conducted to my arms
The strong tall mast, that I might yet escape.
Around that beam I clung, driving before
The stormy blast. Nine days complete I drove,
And on the tenth dark night, the rolling flood 380
Immense convey'd me to Thesprotia's shore.
There me the Hero Phidon, generous King
Of the Thesprotians, freely entertain'd ;
For his own son discovering me with toil
Exhausted and with cold, raised me, and thence 385
Led me humanely to his father's house,
Who cherish'd me, and gave me fresh attire.
There heard I of Ulysses, whom himself
Had entertain'd, he said, on his return
To his own land ; he shew'd me also gold, 390
Brass, and bright steel elaborate, whatsoe'er
Ulysses had amass'd, a store to feed

A less illustrious family than his
To the tenth generation, so immense
His treasures in the royal palace lay. 393
Himself, he said, was to Dodona gone,
There, from the towering oaks of Jove to ask
Counsel divine, if openly to land
(After long absence) in his opulent realm
Of Ithaca, be best, or in disguise. 400
To me the monarch swore, in his own hall
Pouring libation that the ship was launch'd,
And the crew ready for his conduct home.
But me he first dismiss'd, for, as it chanced,
A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound 405
To green Dulichium's isle. He bade the crew
Bear me to King Acastus with all speed ;
But them far other thoughts pleased more, and thoughts
Of harm to me, that I might yet be plunged
In deeper gulfs of woe than I had known. 410
For when the billow-cleaving bark had left
The land remote framing combined a plot
Against my liberty, they stripp'd my vest
And mantle, and this tatter'd raiment foul
Gave me instead, which thy own eyes behold. 415
At even-tide reaching the cultured coast
Of Ithaca, they left me bound on board
With tackle of the bark, and quitting ship
Themselves, made hasty supper on the shore.
But me, meantime, the Gods easily loosed 420
By their own power, when with this wrapper vile
Around my brows, sliding into the sea
At the ship's stern, I laid me on the flood.
With both hands oaring thence my course, I swam
Till past all ken of theirs ; then landing where 425
Thick covert of luxuriant trees I mark'd,
Close couchant down I lay ; they muttering loud,
Paced to and fro, but deeming farther search
Unprofitable, soon embark'd again.
Thus baffling all their search with ease, the Gods 430
Conceal'd and led me thence to the abode
Of a wise man, dooming me still to live.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.

Alas ! my most compassionate guest !
Thou hast much moved me by this tale minute. 435
Of thy sad wanderings and thy numerous woes.
But speaking of Ulysses, thou hast pass'd
All credence ; I at least can give thee none.
Why, noble as thou art, should'st thou invent
Palpable falsehoods ? as for the return 440
Of my regretted Lord, myself I know
That had he not been hated by the Gods
Unanimous, he had in battle died
At Troy, or (that long doubtful war, at last,
Concluded) in his people's arms at home. 445
Then universal Greece had raised his tomb,
And he had even for his son achieved
Immortal glory ; but alas ! by beaks
Of harpies torn, unseemly sight, he lies.
Here is my home the while ; I never seek 450
The city, unless summon'd by discreet
Penelope to listen to the news
Brought by some stranger, whencesoe'er arrived.
Then, all, alike inquisitive, attend,
Both who regret the absence of our King, 455
And who rejoice gratuitous to gorge
His property ; but as for me, no joy
Find I in listening after such reports,
Since an Ætolian cozen'd me, who found
(After long wandering over various lands 460
A fugitive for blood,) my lone retreat.
Him warm I welcom'd and with open arms
Received, who bold affirm'd that he had seen
My master with Idomeneus in Crete
His ships refitting shatter'd by a storm, 465
And that in summer with his godlike band
He would return, bringing great riches home,
Or else in autumn. And thou ancient guest
Forlorn ! since thee the Gods have hither led,
Seek not to gratify me with untruths 470
And to deceive me, since for no such cause
I shall respect or love thee, but alone
By pity influenced, and the fear of Jove.
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.

Thou hast, in truth, a most incredulous mind, 475
Whom even with an oath I have not moved,
Or aught persuaded. Come then—let us make
In terms express a covenant, and the Gods
Who hold Olympus, witness to us both !
If thy own Lord at this thy house arrive, 480
Thou shalt dismiss me decently attired
In vest and mantle, that I may repair
Hence to Dulichium, whither I would go.
But if thy Lord come not, then, gathering all
Thy servants, headlong hurl me from a rock, 485
That other mendicants may fear to lie.

To whom the generous swine-herd in return.
Yes, stranger ! doubtless I should high renown
Obtain for virtue among men, both now
And in all future times, if, having first 490
Invited thee, and at my board regaled,
I next should slay thee ; then my prayers would mount,
Past question, swiftly to Saturnian Jove.
But the hour calls to supper, and, ere long,
The partners of my toils will come prepared 495
To spread the board with no unsavoury cheer.

Thus they conferr'd. And now the swains arrived,
Driving their charge, which fast they soon enclosed
Within their customary pens, and loud
The hubbub was of swine prison'd within. 500
Then call'd the master to his rustic train.
Bring ye the best, that we may set him forth
Before my friend from foreign climes arrived,
With whom ourselves will also feast, who find
The bright tusk'd multitude a painful charge, 505
While others, at no cost of theirs, consume,
Day after day, the profit of our toils.

So saying, his wood for fuel he prepared,
And, dragging thither a well-fatted brawn
Of the fifth year, his servants held him fast 510
At the hearth-side. Nor fail'd the master swain
To adore the Gods, (for wise and good was he,)
But consecration of the victim, first,
Himself performing, cast into the fire
The forehead bristles of the tusky boar, 515

Then pray'd to all above, that safe at length,
 Ulysses might regain his native home.
 Then lifting an huge shive that lay beside
 The fire, he smote the boar, and dead he fell.
 Next, piercing him, and scorching close his hair, 520
 They carved him quickly, and Eumæus spread
 Thin slices crude taken from every limb
 O'er all his fat, then other slices cast,
 Sprinkling them first with meal, into the fire.
 The rest they slash'd and scored, and roasted well, 525
 And placed it, heap'd together, on the board.
 Then rose the good Eumæus to his task
 Of distribution, for he understood
 The hospitable entertainer's part.
 Seven-fold partition of the banquet made, 530
 He gave, with previous prayer, to Maia's³ son
 And to the nymphs one portion of the whole,
 Then served his present guests, honouring first
 Ulysses with the boar's perpetual chine;
 By that distinction just his master's heart 535
 He gratified, and thus the Hero spake.
 Eumæus! be thou as beloved of Jove
 As thou art dear to me, whom, though attired
 So coarsely, thou hast served with such respect!
 To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply. 540
 Eat, noble stranger! and refreshment take
 Such as thou may'st; God⁴ gives, and God denies
 At His own will, for He is Lord of all.
 He said, and to the everlasting Gods
 The firstlings sacrificed of all, then made 545
 Libation, and the cup placed in the hands
 Of city-spoiler Laertiades
 Sitting beside his own allotted share.

³ Mercury.

⁴ Θεός—without a relative, and consequently signifying God in the abstract, is not unfrequently found in Homer; though, fearing to give offence to serious minds unacquainted with the original, I have not always given it that force in the translation. But here the sentiment is such as fixes the sense intended by the author with a precision that leaves me no option. It is observable too, that *δυναται γαρ παντα* is an inscription of power such as the poet never makes to his Jupiter.

Meantime, Mesaulius bread dispensed to all,
Whom in the absence of his Lord, himself 550
Eumæus had from Taphian traders bought
With his own proper goods, at no expense
Either to old Laertes or the Queen.
And now, all stretch'd their hands toward the feast
Reeking before them, and when hunger none 555
Felt more or thirst, Mesaulius clear'd the board.
Then, fed to full satiety, in haste
Each sought his couch. Black came a moonless night,
And Jove all night descended fast in showers,
With howlings of the ever-watery West. 560
Ulysses, at that sound, for trial's sake
Of his good host, if putting off his cloak
He would accommodate him, or require
That service for him at some other hand,
Addressing thus the family began. 565
Hear now, Eumæus, and ye other swains
His fellow-labourers ! I shall somewhat boast,
By wine befool'd, which forces even the wise
To carol loud, to titter and to dance,
And words to utter, oft better suppress'd. 570
But since I have begun, I shall proceed,
Prating my fill. Ah, might those days return
With all the youth and strength that I enjoy'd,
When in close ambush, once, at Troy we lay !
Ulysses, Menelaus, and myself 575
Their chosen coadjutor, led the band.
Approaching to the city's lofty wall
Through the thick bushes and the reeds that gird
The bulwarks, down we lay flat in the marsh,
Under our arms. Then, Boreas blowing loud, 580
A rueful night came on, frosty and charged
With snow that blanch'd us thick as morning rime,
And every shield with ice was crystall'd o'er.
The rest with cloaks and vests well cover'd, slept
Beneath their bucklers ; I alone my cloak, 585
Improvident, had left behind, no thought
Conceiving of a season so severe ;
Shield and belt, therefore, and nought else had I.
The night, at length, nigh spent, and all the stars

Declining in their course, with elbow thrust
Against Ulysses' side I roused the Chief,
And thus address'd him ever prompt to hear. 590

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
I freeze to death. Help me, or I am lost.
No cloak have I ; some evil demon, sure,
Beguil'd me of all prudence, that I came 595
Thus sparely clad ; I shall, I must expire.

So I ; he, ready as he was in arms
And counsel both, the remedy at once
Devised, and thus, low-whispering, answered me. 600

Hush ! lest perchance some other hear—He said,
And leaning on his elbow, spake aloud.

My friends ! all hear—a monitory dream
Hath reached me, for we lie far from the ships.
Haste, therefore, one of you, with my request 605
To Agamemnon, Atreus' son, our Chief,
That he would reinforce us from the camp.

He spake, and at the word, Andræmon's son
Thoas arose, who, casting off his cloak,
Ran thence toward the ships, and folded warm 610
Within it, there lay I till dawn appear'd.

Oh for the vigour of such youth again !
Then, some good peasant here, either for love
Or for respect, would cloak a man like me,
Whom, now, thus sordid in attire ye scorn. 615

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
My ancient guest ! I cannot but approve
Thy narrative, nor hast thou uttered aught
Unseemly, or that needs excuse. No want
Of raiment, therefore, or of aught beside 620
Needful to solace penury like thine,

Shall harm thee here ; yet at the peep of dawn
Gird thy own tatters to thy loins again ;
For *we* have no great store of cloaks to boast,
Or change of vests, but, singly, one for each. 625

But when Ulysses' son shall once arrive,
He will himself with vest and mantle both
Clothe thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.

So saying, he rose, and nearer made his couch
To the hearth-side, spreading it thick with skins 630

Of sheep and goats ; then lay the Hero down,
O'er whom a shaggy mantle large he threw,
Which oft-times served him with a change, when rough
The winter's blast and terrible arose.
So was Ulysses bedded, and the youths 635
Slept all beside him ; but the master-swain
Chose not his place of rest so far remote
From his rude charge, but to the outer court
With his nocturnal furniture repair'd,
Gladdening Ulysses' heart that one so true 640
In his own absence kept his rural stores.
Athwart his sturdy shoulders first he slung
His faulchion keen, then wrapp'd him in a cloak
Thick woven, winter proof ; he lifted, next,
The skin of a well-thriven goat, in bulk 645
Surpassing others, and his javelin took
Sharp-pointed, with which dogs he drove and men.
Thus arm'd, he sought his wonted couch beneath
A hollow rock where the herd slept, secure
From the sharp current of the Northern blast. 650

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus, admonished by Minerva, takes leave of Menelaus, but ere he sails, is accosted by Theoclymenus, a prophet of Argos, whom at his earnest request he takes on board. In the meantime Eumæus relates to Ulysses the means by which he came to Ithaca. Telemachus arriving there, gives orders for the return of his bark to the city, and repairs himself to Eumæus.

MEANTIME to Lacedæmon's spacious vale
 Minerva went, that she might summon thence
 Ulysses' glorious son to his own home.
 Arrived, she found Telemachus reposed
 And Nestor's son beneath the vestibule 5
 Of Menelaus, mighty Chief; she saw
 Pisistratus in bands of gentle sleep
 Fast bound, but not Telemachus; his mind
 No rest enjoy'd, by filial cares disturb'd
 Amid the silent night, when drawing near 10
 To his couch side, the Goddess thus began.
 Thou canst no longer prudently remain
 A wanderer here, Telemachus! thy home
 Abandon'd, and those haughty suitors left
 Within thy walls; fear lest, partition made 15
 Of thy possessions, they devour the whole,
 And in the end thy voyage bootless prove
 Delay not; from brave Menelaus ask
 Dismission hence, that thou may'st find at home
 Thy spotless mother, whom her brethren urge 20
 And her own father even now to wed
 Eurymachus, in gifts and in amount
 Of proffer'd dower superior to them all.
 Some treasure, else, shall haply from thy house
 Be taken, such as thou wilt grudge to spare. 25
 For well thou know'st how woman is disposed;

Her whole anxiety is to increase
 His substance whom she weds ; no care hath she
 Of her first children, or remembers more
 The buried husband of her virgin choice. 30
 Returning, then, to her of all thy train
 Whom thou shalt most approve, the charge commit
 Of thy concerns domestic, till the Gods
 Themselves shall guide thee to a noble wife.
 Hear also this, and mark it. In the frith 35
 Samos the rude, and Ithaca between,
 The chief of all her suitors thy return
 In vigilant ambush wait, with strong desire
 To slay thee, ere thou reach thy native shore,
 But shall not, as I judge, till the earth hide 40
 Many a lewd reveller at thy expense.
 Yet steer thy galley from those isles afar,
 And voyage make by night ; some guardian God
 Shall save thee, and shall send thee prosperous gales.
 Then, soon as thou attain'st the nearest shore 45
 Of Ithaca, dispatching to the town
 Thy bark with all thy people, seek at once
 The swine-herd ; for Eumæus is thy friend.
 There sleep, and send him forth into the town
 With tidings to Penelope, that safe 50
 Thou art restored from Pylus home again.
 She said, and sought the Olympian heights sublime.
 Then, with his heel shaking him, he awoke
 The son of Nestor, whom he thus address'd.
 Rise, Nestor's son, Pisistratus ! lead forth 55
 The steeds, and yoke them. We must now depart.
 To whom the son of Nestor thus replied.
 Telemachus ! what haste soe'er we feel,
 We can by no means prudently attempt
 To drive by night, and soon it will be dawn. 60
 Stay, therefore, till the Hero, Atreus' son,
 Spear-practised Menelaus shall his gifts
 Place in the chariot, and with kind farewell
 Dismiss thee ; for the guest in memory holds
 Through life, the host who treats him as a friend. 65
 Scarce had he spoken, when the golden dawn
 Appearing, Menelaus, from the side

Of beauteous Helen risen, their bed approach'd,
Whose coming when Telemachus perceived,
Clothing himself hastily in his vest 70
Magnificent, and o'er his shoulders broad
Casting his graceful mantle, at the door
He met the Hero, whom he thus address'd.

Atrides Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
Dismiss me hence to Ithaca again, 75
My native isle, for I desire to go.

Him answer'd Menelaus famed in arms.
Telemachus! I will not long delay
Thy wish'd return. I disapprove alike
The host whose assiduity extreme 80
Distresses, and whose negligence offends;
The middle course is best; alike we err,
Him thrusting forth whose wish is to remain,
And hindering the impatient to depart.
This only is true kindness—To regale 85
The present guest and speed him when he would.
Yet stay, till thou shalt see my splendid gifts
Placed in thy chariot, and till I command
My women from our present stores to spread
The table with a plentiful repast. 90

For both the honour of the guest demands,
And his convenience also, that he eat
Sufficient, entering on a length of road.
But if through Hellas thou wilt take thy way
And traverse Argos, I will then myself 95
Attend thee; thou shalt journey with my steeds
Beneath thy yoke, and I will be thy guide
To many a city, whence we shall not go
Ungratified, but shall in each receive
Some gift at least, tripod, or charger bright, 100
Or golden chalice, or a pair of mules.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
Atrides Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
I would at once depart, (for guardian none
Of my possessions have I left behind,) 105
Lest, while I seek my father, I be lost
Myself, or lose what I should grudge to spare.
Which when the valiant Menelaus heard,

He bade his spouse and maidens spread the board
At once with remnants of the last regale. 110
Then Eteoneus came, Boethus' son
Newly arisen, for nigh at hand he dwelt,
Whom Menelaus bade kindle the fire
By which to dress their food, and he obey'd.
He, next, himself his fragrant chamber sought, 115
Not sole, but by his spouse and by his son
Attended, Megapenthes. There arrived
Where all his treasures lay, Atrides, first,
Took forth, himself, a goblet, then consign'd
To his son's hand an argent beaker bright. 120
Meantime, beside her coffers Helen stood
Where lay her variegated robes, fair works
Of her own hand. Producing one, in size
And in magnificence the chief, a star
For splendour, and the lowest place of all, 125
Loveliest of her sex, she bore it thence.
Then, all proceeding through the house, they sought
Telemachus again, whom reaching, thus
The Hero of the golden locks began.
May Jove the Thunderer, dread Juno's mate, 130
Grant thee, Telemachus, such voyage home
As thy own heart desires! accept from all
My stores selected as the richest far
And noblest gift for finish'd beauty—This.
I give thee wrought elaborate a cup, 135
Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
Of the Sidonians, when on my return,
Beneath his roof I lodged. I make it thine. 140
So saying, the Hero, Atreus' son, the cup
Placed in his hands, and Megapenthes set
Before him, next, the argent beaker bright;
But lovely Helen drawing nigh, the robe
Presented to him, whom she thus address'd. 145
I also give thee, oh my son, a gift,
Which seeing, thou shalt think on her whose hands
Wrought it; a present on thy nuptial day
For thy fair spouse; meantime, repose it safe

In thy own mother's keeping. Now, farewell ! 150
Prosperous and happy be thy voyage home !

She ceased, and gave it to him, who the gift
Accepted glad, and in the chariot-chest
Pisistratus the Hero all disposed,
Admiring them the while. They, following, next, 155
The Hero Menelaus to his hall

Each on his couch or on his throne reposed.
A maiden, then, with golden ewer charged
And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,
And spread the polish'd table, which with food 160
Various, selected from her present stores,
The mistress of the household charge supplied.

Boetheus' son stood carver, and to each
His portion gave, while Megapenthes, son
Of glorious Menelaus, served the cup. 165

Then, all with outstretch'd hands the feast assail'd,
And when nor hunger more nor thirst of wine
They felt, Telemachus and Nestor's son
Yoked the swift steeds, and, taking each his seat
In the resplendent chariot, drove at once 170
Right through the sounding portico abroad.

But Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
A golden cup bearing with richest wine
Replete in his right hand, follow'd them forth,
That not without libation first perform'd 175
They might depart ; he stood before the steeds,
And drinking first, thus, courteous, them bespake.

Health to you both, young friends ! and from my lips
Like greeting bear to Nestor, royal Chief,
For he was ever as a father kind 180

To me, while the Achaians warr'd at Troy.

To whom Telemachus discreet replied.
And doubtless, so we will ; at our return
We will report to him, illustrious Prince !
Thy every word. And oh, I would to heaven 185

That reaching Ithaca, I might at home
Ulysses hail as sure, as I shall hence
Depart, with all benevolence by thee
Treated, and rich in many a noble gift.

While thus he spake, on his right hand appear'd 190

An eagle ; in his talons pounced he bore
 A white-plumed goose domestic, newly taken
 From the house court. Ran females all and males
 Clamorous after him ; but he the steeds
 Approaching on the right, sprang into air. 195
 That sight rejoicing and with hearts revived
 They view'd, and thus Pisistratus his speech
 Amid them all to Menelaus turn'd.

Now, Menelaus, think, illustrious Chief!
 If us, this omen, or thyself regard. 200

While warlike Menelaus musing stood
 What answer fit to frame, Helen meantime,
 His spouse long-stoled preventing him, began.

Hear me ; for I will answer as the Gods
 Teach me, and as I think shall come to pass. 205

As he, descending from his place of birth
 The mountains, caught our pamper'd goose away,
 So shall Ulysses, after many woes
 And wanderings, to his home restored, avenge
 His wrongs, or even now is at his home 210
 For all those suitors sowing seeds of woe.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Oh grant it Jove, Juno's high-thundering mate !
 So will I, there arrived, with vow and prayer
 Thee worship, as thou wert thyself divine. 215

He said, and lash'd the coursers ; fiery they
 And fleet, sprang through the city to the plain.
 All day the yoke on either side they shook,
 Journeying swift ; and now the setting sun
 To gloomy evening had resign'd the roads, 220

When they to Pheræ came, and in the house
 Of good Diocles slept, their liberal host,
 Whose sire Orsilochus from Alpheus sprang.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the Dawn,
 Look'd rosy from the East, yoking their steeds, 225
 They in the sumptuous chariot sat again.

Forth through the vestibule they drove, and through
 The sounding portico, when Nestor's son
 Plied brisk the scourge, and willing flew the steeds.
 Thus whirl'd along, soon they approach'd the gate 230
 Of Pylus, when Telemachus, his speech

Turning to his companion, thus began.

How, son of Nestor! shall I win from thee

Not promise only, but performance kind

Of my request? we are not bound alone

To friendship by the friendship of our sires,

But by equality of years, and this

Our journey shall unite us still the more.

Bear me not, I entreat thee, noble friend!

Beyond the ship, but drop me at her side,

Lest ancient Nestor, though against my will,

Detain me in his palace through desire

To feast me, for I dread the least delay.

He spake; then mused Pisistratus how best

He might effect the wishes of his friend,

And thus at length resolved; turning his steeds

With sudden deviation to the shore,

He sought the bark, and placing in the stern

Both gold and raiment, the illustrious gifts

Of Menelaus, thus, in accents wing'd

With ardour, urged Telemachus away.

Dispatch, embark, summon thy crew on board,

Ere my arrival notice give of thine

To the old King; for vehement I know

His temper, neither will he let thee hence,

But, hasting hither, will himself enforce

Thy longer stay, that thou may'st not depart

Ungifted; nought will fire his anger more.

So saying, he to the Pylian city urged

His steeds bright-maned, and at the palace-gate

Arrived of Nestor speedily; meantime

Telemachus exhorted thus his crew.

My gallant friends! set all your tackle, climb

The sable bark, for I would now return.

He spake; they heard him gladly, and at once

All fill'd the benches. While his voyage he

Thus expedited, and beside the stern

To Pallas sacrifice perform'd and pray'd,

A stranger, born remote, who had escaped

From Argos' fugitive for blood, a seer,

And of Melampus' progeny approach'd.

Melampus, in old time, in Pylus dwelt,

235

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270

Mother of flocks, alike for wealth renown'd
 And the magnificence of his abode.
 He, flying from the far-famed Pylian King, 275
 The mighty Neleus, migrated at length
 Into another land, whose wealth, the while,
 Neleus by force possess'd a year complete.
 Meantime, Melampus in the house endured
 Of Phylacus¹ imprisonment and woe, 280
 And burn'd with wrath for Neleus' daughter sake
 By fell Erynnis kindled in his heart.
 But 'scaping death, he drove the lowing bees
 From Phylace to Pylus, well avenged
 His numerous injuries at Neleus' hands 285
 Sustain'd, and gave into his brother's arms
 King Neleus' daughter fair, the promised bride.
 To Argos steed-renown'd he journey'd next,
 There destined to inhabit and to rule
 Multitudes of Achæians. In that land 290
 He married, built a palace, and became
 Father of two brave sons, Antiphates
 And Mantius; to Antiphates was born
 The brave Oïcleus; from Oïcleus sprang
 Amphiaraus, demagogue renown'd, 295
 Whom with all tenderness, and as a friend,
 Alike the Thunderer and Apollo prized;
 Yet reach'd he not the bounds of hoary age,
 But by his mercenary consort's arts
 Persuaded,² met his destiny at Thebes. 300
 He 'gat Alcæon and Amphilochus.
 Mantius was also father of two sons,
 Clytus and Polyphides. Clytus pass'd
 From earth to heaven, and dwells among the Gods,

¹ Iphycus, the son of Phylacus, had seized and detained cattle belonging to Neleus; Neleus ordered his nephew Melampus to recover them, and as security for his obedience seized on a considerable part of his possessions. Melampus attempted the service, failed, and was cast into prison; but at length escaping, accomplished his errand, vanquished Neleus in battle, and carried off his daughter Pero, whom Neleus had promised to the brother of Melampus, but had afterward refused her.

² His wife Eryphyle, bribed by Polynices, persuaded him, though aware that death awaited him in that city, to go to Thebes, where he fell accordingly.

Stolen by Aurora for his beauty's sake. 305
But (brave Amphiaraus once deceased)
Phœbus exalted Polyphides far
Above all others in the prophet's part.
He, anger'd by his father, roam'd away
To Hyperesia, where he dwelt renown'd 310
Throughout all lands the oracle of all.

His son, named Theoclymenus, was he
Who now approach'd ; he found Telemachus
Libation offering in his bark, and prayer,
And in wing'd accents ardent him address'd. 315

Ah, friend ! since sacrificing in this place
I find thee, by these sacred rites and those
Whom thou ador'st, and by thy own dear life,
And by the lives of these thy mariners
I beg true answer ; hide not what I ask. 320
Who art thou ? whence ? where born ? and sprung from whom ?

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
I will inform thee, stranger ! and will solve
Thy questions with much truth. I am by birth
Ithacan, and Ulysses was my sire. 325

But he hath perish'd by a woful death,
And I, believing it, with these have plough'd
The Ocean hither, interested to learn
A father's fate long absent from his home.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus. 330
I also am a wanderer, having slain
A man of my own tribe ; brethren and friends
Numerous had he in Argos steed-renown'd,
And powerful are the Achæians dwelling there.
From them, through terror of impending death, 335
I fly, a banish'd man henceforth for ever.

Ah, save a suppliant fugitive ! lest death
O'ertake me, for I doubt not their pursuit.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discreet. 340
I shall not, be assured, since thou desirest
To join me, chase thee from my bark away.
Follow me, therefore, and with us partake,
In Ithaca, what best the land affords.

So saying, he at the stranger's hand received
His spear, which on the deck he laid, then climb'd

Himself the bark, and seated in the stern,
 At his own side placed Theoclymenus.
 They cast the hawsers loose ; then with loud voice
 Telemachus exhorted all to hand
 The tackle, whom his sailors prompt obey'd. 350
 The tall mast heaving, in its socket deep
 They lodged it, and its cordage braced secure,
 Then, straining at the halyards, hoised the sail.
 Fair wind, and blowing fresh through æther pure
 Minerva sent them, that the bark might run 355
 Her nimblest course through all the briny way.
 Now sank the sun, and dusky evening dimm'd
 The waves, when, driven by propitious Jove,
 His bark stood right for Pheræ ; thence she stretch'd
 To sacred Elis, where the Epeans rule, 360
 And through the sharp Echinades he next
 Steer'd her uncertain whether fate ordain'd
 His life or death, surprisal or escape.

Meantime Ulysses and the swineherd ate
 Their cottage-mess, and the assistant swains 365
 Theirs also ; and when hunger now and thirst
 Had ceas'd in all, Ulysses thus began,
 Proving the swineherd, whether friendly still,
 And anxious for his good, he would entreat
 His stay, or thence hasten him to the town. 370

Eumæus, and all ye his servants, hear !
 It is my purpose, lest I wear thee out,
 Thee and thy friends, to seek at early dawn
 The city, there to beg :—but give me first
 Needful instructions, and a trusty guide 375
 Who may conduct me thither ; there my task
 Must be to roam the streets ; some hand humane
 Perchance shall give me a small pittance there,
 A little bread, and a few drops to drink.
 Ulysses' palace I shall also seek, 380
 And to discreet Penelope report
 My tidings ; neither shall I fail to mix
 With those imperious suitors, who, themselves
 Full-fed, may spare perhaps some boon to me.
 Me shall they find, in whatsoe'er they wish 385
 Their ready servitor, for (understand

And mark me well,) the herald of the skies,
Hermes, from whom all actions of mankind
Their grace receive and polish, is my friend ;
So that in menial offices I fear 390
No rival, whether I be call'd to heap
The hearth with fuel, or dry wood to cleave,
To roast, to carve, or to distribute wine,
As oft the poor are wont who serve the great.

To whom, Eumæus ! at those words displeased, 395
Thou didst reply. Gods ! how could such a thought
Possess thee, stranger ? surely thy resolve
Is altogether fix'd to perish there,

If thou indeed hast purposed with that throng
To mix, whose riot and outrageous acts 400
Of violence echo through the vault of heaven.

None, such as thou, serve *them* ; their servitors
Are youths well-cloak'd, well-vested ; sleek their heads,
And smug their countenances ; such alone
Are their attendants, and the polish'd boards 405
Groan overcharged with bread, with flesh, with wine.

Rest here content ; for neither me nor these
Thou weariest aught, and when Ulysses' son
Shall come, he will with vest and mantle fair
Clothe thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st. 410

To whom, Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I wish thee, O Eumæus ! dear to Jove
As thou art dear to me, for this reprieve
Vouchsafed me kind, from wandering and from woe !
No worse condition is of mortal man 415

Than his who wanders ; for the poor man, driven
By woe and by misfortune homeless forth,
A thousand miseries, day by day, endures.
Since thou detain'st me then, and bidd'st me wait
His coming, tell me if the father still 420

Of famed Ulysses live, whom, going hence,
He left so nearly on the verge of life ?
And lives his mother ? or have both deceased
Already, and descended to the shades ?

To whom the master swineherd thus replied. 425
I will inform thee, and with strictest truth,
Of all that thou hast ask'd. Laertes lives,

But supplication offering to the Gods
Ceaseless, to free him from a weary life,
So deeply his long-absent son he mourns, 430
And the dear consort of his early youth,
Whose death is his chief sorrow, and hath brought
Old age on him, or ere its date arrived.
She died of sorrow for her glorious son,
And died deplorably³; may never friend 435
Of mine, or benefactor die as she!
While yet she lived, dejected as she was,
I found it yet some solace to converse
With her, who rear'd me in my childish days,
Together with her lovely youngest-born 440
The Princess Ctímena; for side by side
We grew, and I scarce honour'd less than she.
But soon as our delightful prime we both
Attain'd, to Samos her they sent, a bride,
And were requited with rich dower; but me 445
Clothed handsomely with tunic and with vest,
And with fair sandals furnish'd, to the field
She ordered forth, yet loved me still the more.
I miss her kindness now; but gracious heaven
Prosper the work on which I here attend; 450
Hence have I food, and hence I drink, and hence
Refresh sometimes a worthy guest like thee.
But kindness none experience I, or can,
From fair Penelope (my mistress now)
In word or action, so is the house cursed 455
With that lewd throng. Glad would the servants be
Might they approach their mistress, and receive
Advice from her; glad too to eat and drink,
And somewhat bear each to his rural home,
For perquisites are every servant's joy. 460
Then answer thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
Alas! good swain, Eumæus, how remote
From friends and country wast thou forced to roam
Even in thy infancy! But tell me true.
The city where thy parents dwelt, did foes 465
Pillage it? or did else some hostile band
Surprising thee alone, on herd or flock

³ She is said to have hanged herself.

Attendant, bear thee with them o'er the Deep,
And sell thee at this Hero's house, who paid
Doubtless for *thee* no sordid price or small?

470

To whom the master swineherd in reply.
Stranger! since thou art curious to be told
My story, silent listen, and thy wine
At leisure quaff. The nights are longest now,
And such as time for sleep afford, and time
For pleasant conference; neither were it good
That thou should'st to thy couch before thy hour,
Since even sleep is hurtful, in excess.

475

Whoever here is weary, and desires
Early repose, let him depart to rest,
And at the peep of day, when he hath fed
Sufficiently, drive forth my master's herd;
But we with wine and a well-furnish'd board
Supplied, will solace mutually derive
From recollection of our sufferings past;
For who hath much endured, and wander'd far,
Finds the recital even of sorrow sweet.

480

Now hear thy question satisfied; attend!
There is an island (thou hast heard, perchance,
Of such an isle,) named Syria⁴; it is placed
Above Ortygia, and a dial owns
True to the tropic changes of the year.⁵

490

No great extent she boasts, yet is she rich
In cattle and in flocks, in wheat and wine.
No famine knows that people, or disease
Noisome of all that elsewhere seize the race

495

Of miserable man; but when old age
Steals on the citizens, Apollo, arm'd
With silver bow and bright Diana come,
Whose gentle shafts dismiss them soon to rest.
Two cities share between them all the isle,

500

⁴ Not improbably the isthmus of Syracuse, an island, perhaps, or peninsula at that period, or at least imagined to be such by Homer. The birth of Diana gave fame to Ortygia. F.

⁵ "Ὀθιτροπαὶ ἡελίοιο.—The Translator has rendered the passage according to that interpretation of it to which several of the best expositors incline. Nothing can be so absurd as to suppose that Homer, so correct in his geography, could mean to place a Mediterranean island under the Tropic.

And both were subject to my father's sway,
 Ctesias Ormenides, a godlike Chief.
 It chanced that from Phœnicia, famed for skill
 In arts marine, a vessel thither came 505
 By sharpeners mann'd, and laden deep with toys.
 Now, in my father's family abode
 A fair Phœnician, tall, full-sized, and skill'd
 In works of elegance, whom they beguiled.
 While she wash'd linen on the beach, beside 510
 The ship, a certain mariner of those
 Seduced her ; for all women, even the wise
 And sober, feeble prove by love assail'd.
 Who was she, he enquired, and whence ? nor she
 Scrupled to tell at once her father's home. 515

I am of Sidon,⁶ famous for her works
 In brass and steel ; daughter of Arybas,
 Who rolls in affluence ; Taphian pirates thence
 Stole me returning from the field, from whom
 This Chief procured me at no little cost. 520

Then answer thus her paramour return'd.
 Wilt thou not hence to Sidon in our ship,
 That thou may'st once more visit the abode
 Of thy own wealthy parents, and themselves ?
 For still they live, and still are wealthy deem'd. 525

To whom the woman. Even that might be,
 Would ye, ye seamen, by a solemn oath
 Assure me of a safe conveyance home.

Then sware the mariners as she required,
 And, when their oath was ended, thus again 530
 The woman of Phœnicia them bespake.

Now, silence ! no man henceforth of you all
 Accost me, though he meet me on the road,
 Or at yon fountain ; lest some tattler run
 With tidings home to my old master's ear, 535
 Who, with suspicion touch'd, may *me* confine
 In cruel bonds, and death contrive for *you*.
 But be ye close ; purchase your stores in haste ;
 And when your vessel shall be freighted full,
 Quick send me notice ; for I mean to bring 540
 What gold soever opportune I find,

⁶ A principal city of Phœnicia.

And will my passage cheerfully defray
With still another moveable. I nurse
The good man's son, an urchin shrewd, of age
To scamper at my side; him will I bring, 545
Whom at some foreign market ye shall prove
Saleable at what price soe'er ye will.

So saying, she to my father's house return'd.
They, there abiding the whole year, their ship
With purchased goods freighted of every kind, 550
And when her lading now complete, she lay
For sea prepared, their messenger arrived
To summon down the woman to the shore.

A mariner of theirs, subtle and shrewd,
Then, entering at my father's gate, produced 555
A splendid collar, gold with amber strung.
My mother (then at home) with all her maids
Handling and gazing on it with delight,
Proposed to purchase it, and he the nod
Significant, gave unobserved, the while, 560
To the Phœnician woman, and return'd.

She, thus inform'd, leading me by the hand
Went forth, and finding in the vestibule
The cups and tables which my father's guests
Had used, (but they were to the forum gone 565
For converse with their friends assembled there,)
Convey'd three cups into her bosom-folds,
And bore them off, whom I a thoughtless child
Accompanied, at the decline of day,

When dusky evening had embrown'd the shore. 570
We, stepping nimbly on, soon reach'd the port
Renown'd, where that Phœnician vessel lay.

They shipp'd us both, and all embarking cleaved
Their liquid road by favourable gales,
Jove's gift, impell'd. Six days we day and night 575
Continual sail'd, but when Saturnian Jove

Now bade the seventh bright morn illumine the skies,
Then shaft-arm'd Dian struck the woman dead.
At once she pitch'd headlong into the bilge
Like a sea-coot, whence heaving her again, 580
The seamen gave her to be fishes' food,
And I survived to mourn her. But the winds

And rolling billows them bore to the coast
Of Ithaca, where with his proper goods
Laertes bought me. By such means it chanced 585
That e'er I saw the isle in which I dwell.

To whom Ulysses, glorious Chief replied.
Eumæus! thou hast moved me much, thy woes
Enumerating thus at large. But Jove 590
Hath neighbour'd all thy evil with this good,
That after numerous sorrows thou hast reach'd
The house of a kind master, at whose hands
Thy sustenance is sure, and here thou lead'st
A tranquil life; but I have late arrived,
City after city of the world explored. 595

Thus mutual they conferr'd, nor leisure found
Save for short sleep, by morning soon surprised.
Meantime the comrades of Telemachus
Approaching land, cast loose the sail, and lower'd
Alert the mast, then oar'd the vessel in. 600
The anchors heaved aground,⁷ and hawsers tied
Secure, themselves, forth-issuing on the shore,
Breakfast prepared, and charged their cups with wine.
When neither hunger now, nor thirst remain'd
Unsatisfied, Telemachus began. 605

Push ye the sable bark without delay
Home to the city. I will to the field
Among my shepherds, and (my rural works
Survey'd) at eve will to the town return.
To-morrow will I set before you wine 610
And plenteous viands, wages of your toil.

To whom the godlike Theoclymenus.
Whither must I, my son? who, of the Chiefs
Of rugged Ithaca, shall harbour me?
Shall I to thine and to thy mother's house? 615

Then thus Telemachus, discreet, replied.
I would invite thee to proceed at once
To our abode, since nought should fail thee there
Of kind reception, but it were a course
Now not advisable; for I must myself 620
Be absent, neither would my mother's eyes
Behold thee, so unfrequent she appears

⁷ The anchors were lodged on the shore, not plunged as ours.

Before the suitors, shunning whom, she sits
Weaving continual at the palace-top.

But I will name to thee another Chief

625

Whom thou may'st seek, Eurymachus, the son
Renown'd of prudent Polybus, whom all
The people here reverence as a God.

Far noblest of them all is he, and seeks

More ardent than his rivals far, to wed

630

My mother, and to fill my father's throne.

But He who dwells above, Jove only knows

If some disastrous day be not ordain'd

For them, or ere those nuptials shall arrive.

While thus he spake, at his right hand appear'd,

635

Messenger of Apollo, on full wing,

A falcon ; in his pounces clench'd he bore

A dove, which rending, down he pour'd her plumes

Between the galley and Telemachus.

Then calling him apart the prophet lock'd

640

His hand in his, and thus explain'd the sign.

Not undirected by the Gods his flight

On our right hand, Telemachus ! this hawk

Hath wing'd propitious ; soon as I perceived

I knew him ominous.—In all the isle

645

No family of a more royal note

Than yours is found, and yours shall still prevail.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discreet.

Grant heaven, my guest ! that this good word of thine

Fail not, and soon thou shalt such bounty share

650

And friendship at my hands, that at first sight,

Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Then, to Piræus thus, his friend approved.

Piræus, son of Clytius ! (for of all

My followers to the shore of Pylus, none

655

More prompt than thou hath my desires perform'd,)

Now also to thy own abode conduct

This stranger, whom with hospitable care

Cherish and honour till myself arrive.

To whom Piræus answer'd, spear-renown'd.

660

Telemachus ! however long thy stay,

Punctual I will attend him, and no want

Of hospitality shall he find with me.

So saying, he climbed the ship, then bade the crew
Embarking also, cast the hawsers loose, 665
And each obedient to his bench repaired.
Meantime Telemachus his sandals bound,
And lifted from the deck his glittering spear.
Then as Telemachus had bidden them,
Son of divine Ulysses, casting loose 670
The hawsers, forth they push'd into the Deep
And sought the city ; while with nimble pace
Proceeding thence, Telemachus attain'd
The cottage soon where good Eumæus slept,
The swine-herd, faithful to his numerous charge. 675

BOOK XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus dispatches Eumæus to the city to inform Penelope of his safe return from Pylus ; during his absence, Ulysses makes himself known to his son. The suitors, having watched for Telemachus in vain, arrive again at Ithaca.

It was the hour of dawn, when in the cot
Kindling fresh fire, Ulysses and his friend
Noble Eumæus dress'd their morning fare,
And sent the herdsmen with the swine abroad.
Seeing Telemachus, the watchful dogs
Bark'd not, but fawn'd around him. At that sight,
And at the sound of feet which now approach'd,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus remark'd.

Eumæus ! certain, either friend of thine
Is nigh at hand, or one whom well thou know'st ;
Thy dogs bark not, but fawn on his approach
Obsequious, and the sound of feet I hear.

Scarce had he ceased, when his own son himself
Stood in the vestibule. Upsprang at once
Eumæus wonder-struck, and from his hand
Let fall the cups with which he was employ'd
Mingling rich wine ; to his young Lord he ran,
His forehead kiss'd, kiss'd his bright-beaming eyes
And both his hands, weeping profuse the while.
As when a father holds in his embrace,
Arrived from foreign lands in the tenth year,
His darling son, the offspring of his age,
His only one, for whom he long hath mourn'd,
So kiss'd the noble peasant o'er and o'er
Godlike Telemachus, as from death escaped,
And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.

Light of my eyes, thou comest ; it is thyself,

Sweetest Telemachus ! I had no hope
To see thee more, once told that o'er the Deep
Thou hadst departed for the Pylion coast. 30
Enter, my precious son ; that I may soothe
My soul with sight of thee from far arrived,
For seldom thou thy feeders and thy farm
Visitest, in the city custom'd much
To make abode, that thou may'st witness there 35
The manners of those hungry suitors proud.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
It will be so. There is great need, my friend !
But here, for thy sake, have I now arrived,
That I may look on thee, and from thy lips 40
Learn if my mother still reside at home,
Or have become spouse of some other Chief,
Leaving untenanted Ulysses' bed
To be by noisome spiders webb'd around.

To whom the master-swineherd in return. 45
Not so, she, patient still as ever, dwells
Beneath thy roof, but all her cheerless days
Despairing wastes, and all her nights in tears.

So saying, Eumæus at his hand received
His brazen lance, and o'er the step of stone 50
Enter'd Telemachus, to whom his sire
Relinquish'd, soon as he appear'd, his seat,
But him Telemachus forbidding, said—

Guest, keep thy seat ; our cottage will afford
Some other, which Eumæus will provide. 55

He ceased, and he, returning at the word,
Reposed again ; then good Eumæus spread
Green twigs beneath, which, cover'd with a fleece,
Supplied Ulysses' offspring with a seat.
He next disposed his dishes on the board 60
With relics charged of yesterday ; with bread
Alert, he heap'd the baskets ; with rich wine
His ivy-cup replenish'd ; and a seat
Took opposite to his illustrious Lord
Ulysses. They toward the plenteous feast 65
Stretch'd forth their hands, (and hunger now and thirst
Both satisfied,) Telemachus, his speech
Addressing to their generous host, began.

Whence is this guest, my father? How convey'd
Came he to Ithaca? What country boast 70
The mariners with whom he here arrived?
For that on foot he found us not, is sure.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
I will with truth answer thee, O my son!
He boasts him sprung from ancestry renown'd 75
In spacious Crete, and hath the cities seen
Of various lands, by fate ordain'd to roam.
Even now, from a Thesprotian ship escaped,
He reach'd my cottage—but he is thy own;
I yield him to thee; treat him as thou wilt; 80
He is thy suppliant, and depends on thee.

Then thus, Telemachus, discreet, replied.
Thy words, Eumæus, pain my very soul.
For what security can I afford
To any in my house? myself am young, 85
Nor yet of strength sufficient to repel
An offer'd insult; and my mother's mind
In doubtful balance hangs, if still with me
An inmate, she shall manage my concerns,
Attentive only to her absent Lord 90
And her own good report, or shall espouse
The noblest of her wooers, and the best
Entitled by the splendour of his gifts.
But I will give him, since I find him lodged
A guest beneath thy roof, tunic and cloak, 95
Sword double-edged, and sandals to his feet,
With convoy to the country of his choice.
Still, if it please thee, keep him here thy guest,
And I will send him raiment, with supplies
Of all sorts, lest he burden thee and thine. 100
But where the suitors come, there shall not he
With my consent, nor stand exposed to pride
And petulance like theirs, lest by some sneer
They wound him, and through him wound also me;
For little is it that the boldest can 105
Against so many; numbers will prevail.

Him answer'd then Ulysses toil-inured.
Oh amiable and good! since even I
Am free to answer thee, I will avow

My heart within me torn by what I hear 110
 Of those injurious suitors, who the house
 Infest of one noble as thou appear'st.
 But say—submittest thou to their control
 Willingly, or because the people, sway'd
 By some response oracular, incline 115
 Against thee? Thou hast brothers, it may chance,
 Slow to assist thee,—for a brother's aid
 Is of importance in whatever cause.
 For oh that I had youth as I have will,
 Or that renown'd Ulysses were my sire, 120
 Or that myself might wander home again,
 Whereof hope yet remains! then might I lose
 My head, that moment, by an alien's hand,
 If I would fail, entering Ulysses' gate,
 To be the bane and mischief of them all. 125
 But if alone to multitudes opposed
 I should perchance be foil'd, nobler it were
 With my own people, under my own roof
 To perish, than to witness evermore
 Their unexampled deeds, guests shoved aside, 130
 Maidens dragg'd forcibly from room to room,
 Casks emptied of their rich contents, and them
 Indulging gluttonous appetite day by day
 Enormous, without measure, without end.
 To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied. 135
 Stranger! thy questions shall from me receive
 True answer. Enmity or hatred none
 Subsists the people and myself between,
 Nor have I brothers to accuse, whose aid
 Is of importance in whatever cause, 140
 For Jove hath from of old with single heirs
 Our house supplied; Arcesias none begat
 Except Laertes, and Laertes none
 Except Ulysses, and Ulysses me
 Left here his only one, and unenjoy'd. 145
 Thence comes it that our palace swarms with foes;
 For all the rulers of the neighbour-isles,
 Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
 Zacynthus, others also rulers here
 In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek 150

In marriage, and my household stores consume.
But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd
Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
To end them ; they my patrimony waste
Meantime, and will destroy me also soon,
As I expect, but heaven disposes all.

155

Eumæus ! haste, my father ! bear with speed
News to Penelope that I am safe,
And have arrived from Pylus ; I will wait
Till thou return ; and well beware that none
Hear thee beside, for I have many foes.

160

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st

To one intelligent. But say beside,
Shall I not also, as I go, inform
Distress'd Laertes ? who while yet he mourn'd
Ulysses only, could o'ersee the works,
And dieted among his menials oft

165

As hunger prompted him ; but now, they say,
Since thy departure to the Pylian shore,
He neither eats as he was wont, nor drinks,
Nor oversees his hinds, but sighing sits
And weeping, wasted even to the bone.

170

Him then Telemachus answer'd discreet,
Hard though it be, yet to his tears and sighs
Him leave we now. We cannot what we would.

175

For were the ordering of all events
Referr'd to our own choice, our first desire
Should be to see my father's glad return.

But once thy tidings told, wander not thou
In quest of Him, but hither speed again.

180

Rather request my mother that she send
Her household's governess without delay
Privately to him ; she shall best inform
The ancient King that I have safe arrived.

185

He said, and urged him forth, who binding on
His sandals, to the city bent his way.

Nor went Eumæus from his home unmark'd

By Pallas, who in semblance of a fair

Damsel, accomplish'd in domestic arts,

190

Approaching to the cottage' entrance, stood

Opposite, by Ulysses plain discern'd,
But to his son invisible ; for the Gods
Appear not manifest alike to all.

The mastiffs saw her also, and with tone
Querulous hid themselves, yet bark'd they not.
She beckon'd him abroad. Ulysses saw
The sign, and issuing through the outer court,
Approach'd her, whom the Goddess thus bespake.

195

Laertes' progeny, for wiles renown'd !
Disclose thyself to thy own son, that death
Concerting and destruction to your foes,
Ye may the royal city seek, nor long
Shall ye my presence there desire in vain,
For I am ardent to begin the fight.

200

205

Minerva spake, and with her rod of gold
Touch'd him ; his mantle, first, and vest she made
Pure as new-blanch'd ; dilating, next, his form,
She gave dimensions ampler to his limbs ;
Swarthy again his manly hue became,
Round his full face, and black his bushy chin.
The change perform'd, Minerva disappear'd,
And the illustrious Hero turn'd again
Into the cottage ; wonder at that sight
Seized on Telemachus ; askance he look'd,
Awe-struck, not unsuspecting of a God,
And in wing'd accents eager thus began.

210

215

Thou art no longer, whom I lately saw,
Nor are thy clothes, nor is thy port the same.
Thou art a God, I know, and dwell'st in heaven.
Oh, smile on us, that we may yield thee rites
Acceptable, and present thee golden gifts
Elaborate ; ah spare us, Power divine !

220

To whom Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I am no God. Why deem'st thou me divine ?
I am thy father, for whose sake thou lead'st
A life of woe, by violence oppress'd.

225

So saying, he kiss'd his son, while from his cheeks
Tears trickled, tears till then perforce restrain'd.
Telemachus, (for he believed him not
His father yet,) thus wondering spake again.

230

My father, saidst thou ? no. Thou art not He,

But some Divinity beguiles my soul
With mockeries, to afflict me still the more ;
For never mortal man could so have wrought
By his own power ; some interposing God
Alone could render thee both young and old,
For old thou wast of late, and foully clad,
But wear'st the semblance now of those in heaven !

235

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Telemachus ! it is not well, my son !
That thou should'st greet thy father with a face
Of wild astonishment, and stand aghast.
Ulysses, save myself, none comes, be sure.
Such as thou seest, after ten thousand woes
Which I have borne, I visit once again
My native country in the twentieth year.
This wonder Athenæan Pallas wrought,
She clothed me even in what form she would,
For so she can. Now poor I seem and old,
Now young again, and clad in fresh attire.
The Gods who dwell in yonder heaven, with ease
Dignify or debase a mortal man.

240

245

250

So saying, he sat. Then threw Telemachus
His arms around his father's neck, and wept.
Desire intense of lamentation seized
On both ; soft murmurs uttering, each indulged
His grief, more frequent wailing than the bird,
(Eagle, or hook-nail'd vulture) from whose nest
Some swain hath stolen her yet unfeather'd young.
So from their eyelids they big drops distill'd
Of tenderest grief, nor had the setting sun
Cessation of their weeping seen, had not
Telemachus his father thus address'd.

255

260

What ship convey'd thee to thy native shore,
My father ! and what country boast the crew ?
For that on foot thou not arrivest, is sure.

265

Then thus divine Ulysses toil-inured.
My son ! I will explicit all relate.
Conducted by Phæacia's maritime sons
I came, a race accustomed to convey
Strangers who visit them across the Deep.
Me o'er the billows in a rapid bark

270

Borne sleeping, on the shores of Ithaca
 They laid; rich gifts they gave me also, brass, 275
 Gold in full bags, and beautiful attire,
 Which, warn'd from heaven, I have in caves conceal'd.
 By Pallas prompted, hither I repair'd
 That we might plan the slaughter of our foes,
 Whose numbers tell me now, that I may know 280
 How powerful, certainly, and who they are,
 And consultation with my dauntless heart
 May hold, if we be able to contend
 Ourselves with all, or must have aid beside.

Then answer thus his son, discreet, return'd. 285
 My father! thy renown hath ever rung
 In thy son's ears, and by report thy force
 In arms, and wisdom I have oft been told.
 But terribly thou speak'st; amazement-fixt
 I hear; can two a multitude oppose, 290
 And valiant warriors all? For neither ten
 Are they, nor twenty, but more numerous far.
 Learn now their numbers. Fifty youths and two
 Came from Dulichium; they are chosen men,
 And six attendants follow in their train; 295
 From Samos twenty youths and four arrive,
 Zacynthus also of Achaia's sons
 Sends twenty more, and our own island adds,
 Herself, her twelve chief rulers; Medon, too,
 Is there the herald, and the bard divine, 300
 With other two, intendants of the board.
 Should we within the palace, we alone,
 Assail them all, I fear lest thy revenge
 Unpleasant to thyself and deadly prove,
 Frustrating thy return. But recollect— 305
 Think, if thou canst, on whose confederate arm
 Strenuous on our behalf we may rely.

To him replied his patient father bold.
 I will inform thee. Mark. Weigh well my words.
 Will Pallas and the everlasting Sire 310
 Alone suffice? or need we other aids?

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
 Good friends indeed are they whom thou hast named,
 Though throned above the clouds; for their control

Is universal both in earth and heaven.

315

To whom Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd.

Not long will they from battle stand aloof,

When once within my palace, in the strength

Of Mars, to sharp decision we shall urge

The suitors. But thyself at early dawn

320

Our mansion seek, that thou may'st mingle there

With that imperious throng ; me in due time

Eumæus to the city shall conduct,

In form a miserable beggar old.

But should they with dishonourable scorn

325

Insult me, thou unmoved my wrongs endure ;

And should they even drag me by the feet

Abroad, or smite me with the spear, thy wrath

Refraining, gently counsel them to cease

From such extravagance ; but well I know

330

That cease they will not, for their hour is come.

And mark me well ; treasure what now I say

Deep in thy soul. When Pallas shall, herself,

Suggest the measure, then shaking my brows,

I will admonish thee ; thou at the sign,

335

Remove what arms soever in the hall

Remain, and in the upper palace safe

Dispose them ; should the suitors, missing them,

Perchance interrogate thee, then reply

Gently—I have removed them from the smoke ;

340

For they appear no more the arms which erst

Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,

But smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.

This weightier reason (thou shalt also say,)

Jove taught me ; lest, intoxicate with wine,

345

Ye should assault each other in your brawls,

Shaming both feast and courtship ; for the view

Itself of arms incites to their abuse.

Yet leave two faulchions for ourselves alone,

Two spears, two bucklers, which with sudden force

350

Impetuous we will seize, and Jove all-wise

Their valour shall, and Pallas, steal away.

This word store also in remembrance deep—

If mine in truth thou art, and of my blood,

Then, of Ulysses to his home return'd

355

Let none hear news from thee, no, not my sire
Laertes, nor Eumæus, nor of all
The menials any, or even Penelope,
That thou and I, alone, may search the drift
Of our domestic women, and may prove 360
Our serving-men, who honours and reveres
And who contemns us both, but chiefly thee
So gracious, and so worthy to be loved.

Him then thus answer'd his illustrious son.
Trust me, my father! thou shalt soon be taught 365
That I am not of drowsy mind obtuse.
But this I think not likely to avail
Or thee or me; ponder it yet again;
For tedious were the task, farm after farm
To visit of those servants, proving each, 370
And the proud suitors merciless devour
Meantime thy substance, nor abstain from aught.
Learn, if thou wilt, (and I that course myself
Advise) who slights thee of the female train,
And who is guiltless; but I would not try 375
From house to house the men, far better proved
Hereafter, if in truth by signs from heaven
Inform'd, thou hast been taught the will of Jove.

Thus they conferr'd. The gallant bark, meantime,
Reach'd Ithaca, which from the Pylia shore 380
Had brought Telemachus with all his band.
Within the many-fathom'd port arrived
His lusty followers haled her far aground,
Then carried thence their arms, but to the house
Of Clytius the illustrious gifts convey'd. 385
Next to the royal mansion they dispatch'd
An herald, charged with tidings to the Queen,
That her Telemachus had reach'd the cot
Of good Eumæus, and the bark had sent
Home to the city; lest the matchless dame 390
Should still deplore the absence of her son.
They then, the herald and the swine-herd, each
Bearing like message to his mistress, met,
And at the palace of the godlike Chief
Arriving, compass'd by the female throng 395
Inquisitive, the herald thus began.

Thy son, O Queen ! is safe ; even now return'd.
Then, drawing nigh to her, Eumæus told
His message also from her son received,
And, his commission punctually discharged, 400
Leaving the palace, sought his home again.

Grief seized and anguish, at those tidings, all
The suitors ; issuing forth, on the outside
Of the high wall they sat, before the gate,
When Polybus' son, Eurymachus began. 405

My friends ! his arduous task, this voyage, deem'd
By us impossible, in our despite
Telemachus hath achieved. Haste ! launch we forth
A sable bark, our best, which let us man
With mariners expert, who, rowing forth 410
Swiftly, shall summon our companions home.

Scarce had he said, when turning where he sat,
Amphinomus beheld a bark arrived
Just then in port ; he saw them furling sail,
And seated with their oars in hand ; he laugh'd 415
Through pleasure at that sight, and thus he spake.

Our message may be spared. Lo ! they arrive.
Either some God inform'd them, or they saw,
Themselves, the vessel of Telemachus
Too swiftly passing to be reach'd by theirs. 420

He spake ; they, rising, hasted to the shore.
Alert they drew the sable bark aground,
And by his servant each his arms dispatch'd
To his own home. Then all to council close
Assembling, neither elder of the land 425
Nor youth allow'd to join them, and the rest
Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, thus bespake.

Ah ! how the Gods have rescued him ! all day
Perch'd on the airy mountain-top, our spies
Successive watch'd ; and when the sun declined, 430
We never slept on shore, but all night long,
Till sacred dawn arose, plough'd the abyss,
Hoping Telemachus, that we might seize
And slay him, whom some Deity hath led,
In our despite, safe to his home again. 435
But frame we yet again means to destroy
Telemachus ; ah—let not Him escape !

For end of this our task, while he survives,
None shall be found, such prudence he displays
And wisdom ; neither are the people now 440
Unanimous our friends as heretofore.
Come, then—prevent him, ere he call the Greeks
To council ; for he will not long delay,
But will be angry, doubtless, and will tell
Amid them all, how we in vain devised 445
His death, a deed which they will scarce applaud,
But will, perhaps, punish and drive us forth
From our own country to a distant land.—
Prevent him, therefore, quickly ; in the field
Slay him, or on the road ; so shall his wealth 450
And his possessions on ourselves devolve,
Which we will share equally, but his house
Shall be the Queen's, and his whom she shall wed.
Yet, if not so inclined, ye rather choose
That he should live and occupy entire 455
His patrimony, then, no longer, here
Assembled, let us revel at his cost,
But let us all with spousal gifts produced
From our respective treasures, woo the Queen,
Leaving her in full freedom to espouse 460
Who proffers most, and whom the fates ordain.
He ceased ; the assembly silent sat and mute.
Then rose Amphinomus amid them all,
Offspring renown'd of Nisus, son himself
Of King Aretias. He had thither led 465
The suitor train who from the pleasant isle
Corn-clad, of green Dulichium had arrived,
And by his speech pleased far beyond them all
Penelope, for he was just and wise,
And thus, well-counselling the rest, began. 470
Not I, my friends ! far be the thought from me
To slay Telemachus ! it were a deed
Momentous, terrible, to slay a prince.
First, therefore, let us counsel ask of heaven,
And if Jove's oracle that course approve, 475
I will encourage you, and will myself
Be active in his death ; but if the Gods
Forbid it, then, by my advice, forbear.

So spake Amphinomus, whom all approved.
Arising then, into Ulysses' house 480
They went, where each his splendid seat resumed.

A novel purpose occupied, meantime,
Penelope; she purposed to appear
Before her suitors, whose design to slay
Telemachus she had from Medon learn'd, 485
The herald, for his ear had caught the sound.
Toward the hall with her attendant train
She moved, and when, most graceful of her sex,
Where sat the suitors she arrived, between
The columns standing of the stately dome, 490
And covering with her white veil's lucid folds
Her features, to Antinoüs thus she spake.

Antinoüs, proud, contentious, evermore
To mischief prone! the people deem thee wise
Past thy compeers, and in all grace of speech 495
Preeminent, but such wast never thou.

Inhuman! why is it thy dark design
To slay Telemachus? and why with scorn
Rejectest thou the suppliant's prayer,¹ which Jove
Himself hath witness'd? Plots please not the Gods. 500
Know'st not that thy own father refuge found
Here, when he fled before the people's wrath
Whom he had irritated by a wrong

Which, with a band of Taphian robbers join'd,
He offered to the Thesprots, our allies? 505

They would have torn his heart, and would have laid
All his delights and his possessions waste,
But my Ulysses slaked the furious heat
Of their revenge, whom thou requitest now
Wasting his goods, soliciting his wife, 510
Slaying his son, and filling me with woe.

But cease, I charge thee, and bid cease the rest.

To whom the son of Polybus replied,
Eurymachus.—Icarius' daughter wise!
Take courage, fair Penelope, and chase 515
These fears unreasonable from thy mind!
The man lives not, nor shall, who while I live,

¹ Alluding probably to entreaties made to him at some former time by herself and Telemachus, that he would not harm them. Clarke.

And faculty of sight retain, shall harm
Telemachus, thy son. For thus I say,
And thus will I perform; his blood shall stream 520
A sable current from my lance's point
That moment; for the city-waster Chief

Ulysses, oft, me placing on his knees,
Hath fill'd my infant grasp with savoury food,
And given me ruddy wine. I, therefore, hold 525
Telemachus of all men most my friend,
Nor hath he death to fear from hand of ours.
Yet, if the Gods shall doom him, die he must.

So he encouraged her, who yet, himself,
Plotted his death. She, re-ascending, sought 530
Her stately chamber, and, arriving there,
Deplored with tears her long-regretted Lord
Till Athenæan Pallas azure-eyed
Dews of soft slumber o'er her lids diffused.

And now, at even-tide, Eumæus reach'd 535
Ulysses and his son. A yearling swine
Just slain they skilfully for food prepared,
When Pallas, drawing nigh, smote with her wand
Ulysses, at the stroke rendering him old,
And his apparel sordid as before, 540
Lest, knowing him, the swain at once should seek
Penelope, and let the secret forth.

Then foremost him Telemachus address'd.
Noble Eumæus! thou art come; what news
Bring'st from the city? Have the warrior band 545
Of suitors, hopeless of their ambush, reach'd
The port again, or wait they still for me?

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
No time for such enquiry, nor to range,
Curious, the streets had I, but anxious wish'd 550
To make my message known, and to return.
But, as it chanced, a nimble herald sent
From thy companions, met me on the way,
Who reach'd thy mother first. Yet this I know,
For this I saw. Passing above the town 555
Where they have piled a way-side hill of stones
To Mercury, I beheld a gallant bark

Entering the port ; a bark she was of ours,
The crew were numerous, and I mark'd her deep-
Laden with shields and spears of double edge.
Theirs I conjectured her, and could no more.

560

He spake, and, by Eumæus unperceived,
Telemachus his father eyed and smiled.
Their task accomplish'd, and the table spread,
They ate, nor any his due portion miss'd,
And hunger now and thirst both sated, all
To rest repair'd, and took the gift of sleep.

565

BOOK XVII.

A R G U M E N T.

Telemachus returns to the city, and relates to his mother the principal passages of his voyage; Ulysses, conducted by Eumæus, arrives there also, and enters among the suitors, having been known only by his old dog Argus, who dies at his feet. The curiosity of Penelope being excited by the account which Eumæus gives her of Ulysses, she orders him immediately into her presence, but Ulysses postpones the interview till evening, when the suitors having left the palace, there shall be no danger of interruption. Eumæus returns to his cottage.

Now look'd Aurora from the East abroad,
 When the illustrious offspring of divine
 Ulysses bound his sandals to his feet ;
 He seized his sturdy spear match'd to his gripe,
 And to the city meditating quick 5
 Departure now, the swine-herd thus bespake.

Father ! I seek the city to convince
 My mother of my safe return, whose tears,
 I judge, and lamentations shall not cease 10
 Till her own eyes behold me. But I lay
 On thee this charge. Into the city lead,
 Thyself, this hapless guest, that he may beg
 Provision there, a morsel and a drop
 From such as may, perchance, vouchsafe the boon.
 I cannot, vex'd and harass'd as I am, 15
 Feed all, and should the stranger take offence,
 The worse for him. Plain truth is my delight.

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
 Nor is it my desire to be detained.
 Better the mendicant in cities seeks 20
 His dole, vouchsafe it whosoever may,
 Than in the villages. I am not young,
 Nor longer of an age that well accords
 With rural tasks, nor could I all perform

That it might please a master to command. 25
Go then, and when I shall have warm'd my limbs
Before the hearth, and when the risen sun
Shall somewhat chase the cold, thy servant's task
Shall be to guide me thither, as thou bidd'st.
For this is a vile garb ; the frosty air 30
Of morning will benumb me thus attired,
And, as ye say, the city is remote.

He ended, and Telemachus in haste
Set forth, his thoughts all teeming as he went,
With dire revenge. Soon in the palace-courts 35
Arriving, he reclined his spear against
A column and proceeded to the hall.
Him Euryclea, first, his nurse perceived,
While on the variegated seats she spread
Their fleecy covering ; swift with tearful eyes 40
She flew to him, and the whole female train
Of brave Ulysses swarm'd around his son,
Clasping him, and his forehead and his neck
Kissing affectionate ; then came herself,
As golden Venus or Diana fair, 45
Forth from her chamber to her son's embrace,
The chaste Penelope ; with tears she threw
Her arms around him, his bright-beaming eyes
And forehead kiss'd, and with a murmur'd plaint
Maternal in wing'd accents thus began. 50

Thou hast return'd, light of my eyes ! my son !
My loved Telemachus ! I had no hope
To see thee more when once thou hadst embark'd
For Pylus, privily, and with no consent
From me obtain'd, news seeking of thy sire. 55
But haste ; unfold. Declare what thou hast seen.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
Ah mother ! let my sorrows rest, nor me
From death so lately 'scaped afflict anew,
But, bathed and habited in fresh attire, 60
With all the maidens of thy train ascend
To thy superior chamber, there to vow
A perfect hecatomb to all the Gods,
When Jove shall have avenged our numerous wrongs.
I seek the forum, there to introduce 65

A guest, my follower from the Pylian shore,
 Whom sending forward with my noble band,
 I bade Piræus to his own abode
 Lead him, and with all kindness entertain
 The stranger, till I should myself arrive.

70

He spake, nor flew his words useless away.
 She, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
 Vow'd a full hecatomb to all the Gods,
 Would Jove but recompense her numerous wrongs.
 Then, spear in hand, went forth her son, two dogs
 Fleet-footed following him. O'er all his form
 Pallas diffused a dignity divine,
 And every eye gazed on him as he pass'd.
 The suitors throng'd him round, joy on their lips
 And welcome, but deep mischief in their hearts.
 He, shunning all that crowd, chose to himself
 A seat, where Mentor sat, and Antiphus,
 And Halytherses, long his father's friends
 Sincere, who of his voyage much enquired.
 Then drew Piræus nigh, leading his guest
 Toward the forum ; nor Telemachus
 Stood long aloof, but greeted his approach,
 And was accosted by Piræus thus.

75

80

85

Sir ! send thy menial women to bring home
 The precious charge committed to my care,
 Thy gifts at Menelaüs' hands received.

90

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Piræus ! wait ; for I not yet foresee
 The upshot. Should these haughty ones effect
 My death, clandestine, under my own roof,
 And parcel my inheritance by lot,
 I rather wish those treasures thine, than theirs.
 But should I with success plan for them all
 A bloody death, then, wing'd with joy, thyself
 Bring home those presents to thy joyful friend.

95

100

So saying, he led the anxious stranger thence
 Into the royal mansion, where arrived,
 Each cast his mantle on a couch or throne,
 And plunged his feet into a polish'd bath.
 There wash'd and lubricated with smooth oils,
 From the attendant maidens each received

105

Tunic and shaggy mantle. Thus attired,
Forth from the baths they stepp'd, and sat again.
A maiden, next, with golden ewer charged,
And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands, 110
And spread the polish'd table, which with food
Of all kinds, remnants of the last regale,
The mistress of the household charge supplied,
Meantime, beside a column of the dome
His mother, on a couch reclining, twirl'd 115
Her slender threads. They to the furnish'd board
Stretch'd forth their hands, and hunger now and thirst
Both satisfied, Penelope began.

Telemachus! I will ascend again,
And will repose me on my woful bed; 120
For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
With Atreus' sons to Troy. For not a word
Thou would'st vouchsafe me till our haughty guests
Had occupied the house again, of all 125
That thou hast heard (if aught indeed thou hast)
Of thy long-absent father's wish'd return.

Her answer'd then Telemachus discreet.
Mother! at thy request I will with truth
Relate the whole. At Pylus' shore arrived 130
We Nestor found, chief of the Pylian race.
Receiving me in his august abode,
He entertain'd me with such welcome kind
As a glad father shews to his own son
Long-lost and newly found; so Nestor me, 135
And his illustrious offspring, entertain'd,
But yet assured me that he nought had heard
From mortal lips of my magnanimous sire,
Whether alive or dead; with his own steeds
He sent me, and with splendid chariot thence 140
To spear-famed Menelaüs, Atreus' son.
There saw I Helen, by the Gods' decree
Authoress of trouble both to Greece and Troy.
The Hero Menelaüs then enquired
What cause had urged me to the pleasant vale 145
Of Lacedæmon; plainly I rehearsed
The occasion, and the Hero thus replied.

Ye Gods ! they are ambitious of the bed
 Of a brave man, however base themselves.
 But, as it chances when the hart hath laid 150
 Her fawns new-yea'n'd and sucklings yet, to rest
 In some resistless lion's den, she roams
 Meantime the hills, and in the grassy vales
 Feeds heedless, but the lion to his lair
 Returning soon, both her and hers destroys, 155
 So shall thy father, brave Ulysses, them.
 Jove ! Pallas ! and Apollo ! oh that such
 As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
 With Philomelides, whom wrestling, flat
 He threw, when all Achaia's sons rejoiced, 160
 Ulysses now might mingle with his foes !
 Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
 But thy inquiries neither indirect
 Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
 But all that from the Ancient of the Deep¹ 165
 I have received will utter, hiding nought.
 The God declared that he had seen thy sire
 In a lone island, sorrowing, and detain'd
 An inmate in the grotto of the nymph
 Calypso, wanting also means by which 170
 To reach the country of his birth again,
 For neither gallant barks nor friends had he
 To speed his passage o'er the boundless waves.
 So Menelaüs spake, the spear-renown'd.
 My errand thus accomplish'd, I return'd— 175
 And by the Gods with gales propitious blest,
 Was wafted swiftly to my native shore.
 He spake, and tumult in his mother's heart
 So speaking, raised. Consolatory, next,
 The godlike Theoclymenus began. 180
 Consort revered of Laertiades !
 Little the Spartan knew, but list to me,
 For I will plainly prophesy and sure.
 Be Jove of all in heaven my witness first,
 Then, this thy hospitable board, and, last, 185
 The household Gods of the illustrious Chief

¹ Proteus.

Ulysses, at whose hearth² I have arrived,
That, even now, within his native isle
Ulysses somewhere sits, or creeps obscure,
Witness of these enormities, and seeds 190
Sowing of dire destruction for his foes ;
So sure an augury, while on the deck
Reclining of the gallant bark, I saw,
And with loud voice proclaim'd it to thy son.

Him answer'd then Penelope discreet. 195
Grant heaven, my guest, that this good word of thine
Fail not ! then shalt thou soon such bounty share
And friendship at my hands, that at first sight
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Thus they conferr'd. Meantime the suitors hurl'd 200
The quoit and lance on the smooth area spread
Before Ulysses' gate, the custom'd scene
Of their contentions, sports, and clamours rude.
But when the hour of supper now approach'd,
And from the pastures on all sides the sheep 205
Came with their wonted drivers, Medon then
(For he of all the heralds pleased them most,
And waited at the board) them thus address'd.

Enough of play, young princes ! entering now
The house, prepare we sedulous our feast, 210
Since in well-timed refreshment harm is none.

He spake, whose admonition pleased. At once
All rising sought the palace ; there arrived,
Each cast his mantle off, which on his throne
Or couch he spread, then brisk to slaughter fell 215
Of many a victim ; sheep and goats and brawns
They slew, all fattened, and a pastured ox,
Hastening the banquet ; nor with less dispatch
Ulysses and Eumæus now prepared
To seek the town, when thus the swain began. 220

My guest ! since thy fix'd purpose is to seek
This day the city as my master bade,
Though I, in truth, much rather wish thee here
A keeper of our herds, yet through respect
And reverence of his orders, whose reproof 225

² The hearth was the altar on which the lares or household gods were worshipped.

I dread, for masters seldom gently chide,
 I would be gone. Arise, let us depart,
 For day already is far-spent, and soon
 The air of even-tide will chill thee more.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 230
 It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
 To one intelligent. Let us depart,
 And lead, thyself, the way ; but give me, first,
 (If thou have one already hewn,) a staff
 To lean on, for ye have described the road 235
 Rugged, and oftentimes dangerous to the foot.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
 He cast, suspended by a leathern twist,
 Eumæus gratified him with a staff,
 And forth they went, leaving the cottage kept 240
 By dogs and swains. He city-ward his King
 Led on, in form a squalid beggar old,
 Halting, and in unseemly garb attired.
 But when, slow-travelling the craggy way,
 They now approach'd the town, and had attain'd 245
 The marble fountain deep, which with its streams
 Pellucid all the citizens supplied,
 (Ithacus had that fountain framed of old
 With Neritus and Polyctor, over which
 A grove of water nourish'd alders hung 250
 Circular on all sides, while cold the rill
 Ran from the rock, on whose tall summit stood
 The altar of the nymphs, by all who pass'd
 With sacrifice frequented, still, and prayer ;)
 Melanthius, son of Dolius, at that fount 255
 Met them ; the chosen goats of every flock,
 With two assistants, from the field he drove,
 The suitors' supper. He, seeing them both,
 In surly accent boorish, such as fired
 Ulysses with resentment, thus began. 260

Ay—this is well—the villain leads the vile ;—
 Thus evermore the Gods join like to like.
 Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither would'st conduct
 This morsel-hunting mendicant obscene,
 Defiler base of banquets ? many a post 265
 Shall he rub smooth that props him while he begs

Lean alms, sole object of his low pursuit,
Who ne'er to sword or tripod yet aspired.
Would'st thou afford him to me for a guard
Or sweeper of my stalls, or to supply 270
My kids with leaves, he should on bulkier thewes
Supported stand, though nourish'd but with whey.
But no such useful arts hath he acquired,
Nor likes he work, but rather much to extort
From others food for his unsated maw. 275
But mark my prophecy, for it is true,
At famed Ulysses' house should he arrive,
His sides shall shatter many a footstool hurl'd
Against them by the offended princes there.

He spake, and drawing nigh, with his raised foot,
Insolent as he was and brutish, smote
Ulysses' haunch, yet shook not from his path
The firm-set Chief, who doubtful mused awhile
Whether to rush on him, and with his staff
To slay him, or uplifting him on high, 285
Downward to dash him headlong; but his wrath
Restraining, calm he suffer'd the affront.
Him then Eumæus with indignant look
Rebuking, raised his hands, and fervent pray'd.

Nymphs of the fountains, progeny of Jove! 290
If e'er Ulysses on your altar burn'd
The thighs of fatted lambs or kidlings, grant
This my request. O let the Hero soon,
Conducted by some Deity, return!
So shall he quell that arrogance which safe 295
Thou now indulgest, roaming day by day
The city, while bad shepherds mar the flocks.

To whom the goat-herd answer thus return'd
Melanthius. Marvellous! how rare a speech
The subtle cur hath framed! whom I will send 300
Far hence at a convenient time on board
My bark, and sell him at no little gain.
I would, that he who bears the silver bow
As sure might pierce Telemachus this day
In his own house, or that the suitors might, 305
As that same wanderer shall return no more!

He said, and them left pacing slow along,

But soon, himself, at his Lord's house arrived ;
 There entering bold, he with the suitors sat
 Opposite to Eurymachus, for him 310
 He valued most. The sewers his portion placed
 Of meat before him, and the maiden, chief
 Directress of the household, gave him bread.
 And now, Ulysses, with the swain his friend
 Approach'd, when, hearing the harmonious lyre, 315
 Both stood, for Phemius had begun his song.
 He grasp'd the swine-herd's hand, and thus he said.

This house, Eumæus ! of Ulysses seems
 Passing magnificent, and to be known
 With ease for his among a thousand more. 320
 One pile supports another, and a wall
 Crested with battlements surrounds the court ;
 Firm too the folding doors all force of man
 Defy ; but numerous guests, as I perceive,
 Now feast within ; witness the savoury steam 325
 Fast fuming upward, and the sounding harp,
 Divine associate of the festive board.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Thou hast well guess'd ; no wonder ; thou art quick
 On every theme ; but let us well forecast 330
 This business. Wilt thou, entering first thyself
 The splendid mansion, with the suitors mix,
 Me leaving here ? or shall I lead the way
 While thou remain'st behind ? yet linger not,
 Lest seeing thee without, some servant strike 335
 Or drive thee hence. Consider which were best.

Him answer'd then the patient Hero bold.
 It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
 To one intelligent. Lead thou the way,
 Me leaving here, for neither stripes nor blows 340
 To me are strange. Much exercised with pain
 In fight and on the Deep, I have long since
 Learn'd patience. Follow next what follow may !
 But to suppress the appetite, I deem
 Impossible ; the stomach is a source 345
 Of ills to man, an avaricious gulf
 Destructive, which to satiate, ships are rigg'd,
 Seas traversed, and fierce battles waged remote.

Thus they discoursing stood ; Argus the while,
Ulysses' dog, uplifted where he lay 350
His head and ears erect. Ulysses him
Had bred long since himself, but rarely used,
Departing first to Ilium. Him the youths
In other days led frequent to the chase
Of wild goat, hart, and hare ; but now he lodged 355
A poor old cast-off, of his Lord forlorn,
Where mules and oxen had before the gate
Much ordure left, with which Ulysses' hinds
Should in due time manure his spacious fields.
There lay, with dog-devouring vermin foul 360
All over, Argus ; soon as he perceived
Long-lost Ulysses nigh, down fell his ears
Clapp'd close, and with his tail glad sign he gave
Of gratulation, impotent to rise
And to approach his master as of old. 365
Ulysses, noting him, wiped off a tear
Unmark'd, and of Eumæus quick enquired.

I can but wonder seeing such a dog
Thus lodged, Eumæus ! beautiful in form
He is, past doubt, but whether he hath been 370
As fleet as fair I know not ; rather such
Perchance as masters sometimes keep to grace
Their tables, nourish'd more for show than use.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
He is the dog of one dead far remote. 375
But had he now such feat-performing strength
As when Ulysses left him going hence
To Ilium, in one moment thou shouldst mark,
Astonish'd, his agility and force.
He never in the sylvan deep recess 380
The wild beast saw that 'scaped him, and he track'd
Their steps infallible ; but he hath now
No comfort, for (the master dead afar)
Their heedless servants care not for his dog.
Domestics, missing once their Lord's control, 385
Grow wilful, and refuse their proper tasks ;
For whom Jove dooms to servitude, he takes
At once the half of that man's worth away.

He said, and, entering at the portal, join'd
s. c.—8.

The suitors. Then his destiny released
Old Argus, soon as he had lived to see
Ulysses in the twentieth year restored. 390

Godlike Telemachus, long ere the rest,
Marking the swine-herd's entrance, with a nod
Summon'd him to approach. Eumæus cast 395
His eye around, and seeing vacant there
The seat which the dispenser of the feast
Was wont to occupy while he supplied
The numerous guests, planted it right before
Telemachus, and at his table sat, 400
On which the herald placed for him his share
Of meat, and from the baskets gave him bread.
Soon after *him*, Ulysses enter'd slow
The palace, like a squalid beggar old,
Staff-propp'd, and in loose tatters foul attired. 405

Within the portal on the ashen sill
He sat, and seeming languid, lean'd against
A cypress pillar by the builder's art
Polish'd long since, and planted at the door.
Then took Telemachus a loaf entire 410
Forth from the elegant basket, and of flesh
A portion large as his two hands contain'd,
And beck'ning close the swine-herd, charged him thus.

These to the stranger; whom advise to ask
Some dole from every suitor; bashful fear 415
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

He spake; Eumæus went, and where he sat
Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

Telemachus, oh stranger, sends thee these,
And counsels thee to importune for more 420
The suitors, one by one; for bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Jove, King of all, grant every good on earth
To kind Telemachus, and the complete 425
Accomplishment of all that he desires!

He said, and with both hands outspread, the mess
Receiving as he sat, on his worn bag
Disposed it at his feet. Long as the bard
Chaunted, he ate, and when he ceased to eat, 430

Then also ceased the bard divine to sing.
And now ensued loud clamour in the hall
And tumult, when Minerva, drawing nigh
To Laertiades, impelled the Chief
Crusts to collect, or any pittance small 435
At every suitor's hand, for trial's sake
Of just and unjust; yet deliverance none
From evil she design'd for any there.
From left to right³ his progress he began
Petitioning, with outstretch'd hands, the throng, 440
As one familiar with the beggar's art.
They pitying gave to him, but view'd him still
With wonder, and enquiries mutual made
Who, and whence was he? Then the goat-herd rose
Melanthius, and the assembly thus address'd. 445

Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen!
This guest, of whom ye ask, I have beheld
Elsewhere; the swine-herd brought him; but himself
I know not, neither who nor whence he is.

So he; then thus Antinoüs stern rebuked 450
The swine-herd. Ah, notorious as thou art,
Why hast thou shewn this vagabond the way
Into the city? are we not enough
Infested with these troublers of our feasts?
Deem'st it a trifle that such numbers eat 455
At thy Lord's cost, and hast thou, therefore, led
This fellow hither, found we know not where?

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Antinoüs! though of high degree, thou speak'st
Not wisely. What man to another's house 460
Repairs to invite him to a feast, unless
He be of those who by profession serve
The public, prophet, healer of disease,
Ingenious artist, or some bard divine
Whose music may exhilarate the guests? 465
These, and such only, are in every land
Call'd to the banquet; none invites the poor,
Who much consume, and no requital yield.
But thou of all the suitors roughly treat'st

³ That he might begin auspiciously. Wine was served in the same direction. F.

Ulysses' servants most, and chiefly me ; 470
 Yet thee I heed not, while the virtuous Queen
 Dwells in this palace, and her godlike son.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Peace ! answer not verbose a man like him.
 Antinoüs hath a tongue accustom'd much 475
 To tauntings, and promotes them in the rest.

Then, turning to Antinoüs, quick he said—
 Antinoüs ! as a father for his son
 Takes thought, so thou for me, who bidd'st me chase
 The stranger harshly hence ; but God⁴ forbid ! 480
 Impart to him. I grudge not, but myself
 Exhort thee to it ; neither, in this cause,
 Fear thou the Queen, or in the least regard
 Whatever menial throughout all the house
 Of famed Ulysses. Ah ! within thy breast 485
 Dwells no such thought ; thou lovest not to impart
 To others, but to gratify thyself.

To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
 High-soaring and intemperate in thy speech,
 How hast thou said, Telemachus ? Would all 490
 As much bestow on him, he should not seek
 Admittance here again three months to come.

So saying, he seized the stool which, banquetting,
 He press'd with his nice feet, and from beneath
 The table forth advanced it into view. 495
 The rest all gave to him, with bread and flesh.
 Filling his wallet, and Ulysses, now,
 Returning to his threshold, there to taste
 The bounty of the Greeks, paused in his way
 Beside Antinoüs, whom he thus address'd. 500

Kind sir, vouchsafe to me ! for thou appear'st
 Not least, but greatest of the Achaians here,
 And hast a kingly look. It might become
 Thee therefore above others to bestow,
 So should I praise thee wheresoe'er I roam. 505
 I also lived the happy owner once
 Of such a stately mansion, and have given
 To numerous wanderers (whencesoe'er they came)
 All that they needed ; I was also served

⁴ Here again Θεός occurs in the abstract.

By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
The envied owner opulent and blest. 510
But Jove (for so it pleased him) hath reduced
My all to nothing, prompting me, in league
With rovers of the Deep, to sail afar
To Egypt, for my sure destruction there. 515
Within the Egyptian stream my barks well oar'd
I station'd, and, enjoining strict my friends
To watch them close-attendant at their side,
Commanded spies into the hill-tops ; but they,
Under the impulse of a spirit rash 520
And hot for quarrel, the well-cultured fields
Pillaged of the Egyptians, captive led
Their wives and little-ones, and slew the men.
Ere long, the loud alarm their city reach'd.
Down came the citizens, by dawn of day, 525
With horse and foot and with the gleam of arms
Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
Struck all my people ; none found courage more
To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on every side.
There, numerous by the glittering spear we fell 530
Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
Alive to servitude ; but me they gave
To Dmetor, King in Cyprus, Jasus' son ;
He entertain'd me liberally, and thence
This land I reach'd, but poor and woe-begone. 535
Then answer thus Antinoüs harsh return'd.
What demon introduced this nuisance here,
This troubler of our feast ? stand yonder, keep
Due distance from my table, or expect
To see an Egypt and a Cyprus worse 540
Than those, bold mendicant, and void of shame !
Thou hauntest each, and inconsiderate each
Gives to thee, because gifts at others' cost
Are cheap, and, plentifully served themselves,
They squander, heedless, viands not their own. 545
To whom Ulysses, while he slow retired.
Gods ! how illiberal with that specious form !
Thou wouldst not grant the poor a grain of salt
From thy own board, who at another's fed
So nobly, canst not spare a crust to me. 550

He spake ; then raged Antinoüs still the more,
And in wing'd accents, louring, thus replied.

Take such dismission now as thou deservest,
Opprobrious ! hast thou dared to scoff at me ?

So saying, he seized his stool, and on the joint 555
Of his right shoulder smote him ; firm as rock
He stood, by no such force to be displaced,
But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds
Of vengeance ruminating, sought again
His seat the threshold, where his bag full-charged 560
He grounded, and the suitors thus address'd.

Hear now, ye suitors of the matchless Queen,
My bosom's dictates. Trivial is the harm,
Scarce felt, if, fighting for his own, his sheep
Perchance, or beeves, a man receive a blow. 565
But me Antinoüs struck, for that I ask'd
Food from him merely to appease the pangs
Of hunger, source of numerous ills to man.
If then the poor man have a God to avenge
His wrongs, I pray to him that death may seize 570
Antinoüs, ere his nuptial hour arrive !

To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd,
Son of Eupithes. Either seated there
Or going hence, eat, stranger, and be still ;
Lest for thy insolence, by hand or foot 575
We drag thee forth, and thou be flay'd alive.

He ceased, whom all indignant heard, and thus
Even his own proud companions censured him.

Antinoüs ! thou didst not well to smite
The wretched vagabond. O thou art doom'd 580
For ever, if there be a God in heaven⁵ ;
For in similitude of strangers' oft,
The Gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
Repair to populous cities, where they mark
The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men. 585

⁵ Εἰ δὲ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ ἐστὶ.

Eustathius, and Clarke after him, understand an aposiopesis here, as if the speaker meant to say—what if there should be ? or—suppose there should be ? But the sentence seems to fall in better with what follows interpreted as above, and it is a sense of the passage not unwarranted by the opinion of other commentators.—See Schaufelbergerus.

So they, for whose reproof he little cared.
But in his heart Telemachus that blow
Resented, anguish-torn, yet not a tear
He shed, but silent shook his brows, and mused
Terrible things. Penelope, meantime, 590
Told of the wanderer so abused beneath
Her roof, among her maidens thus exclaim'd.

So may Apollo, glorious archer, smite
Thee also ! Then Eurynome replied,
Oh might our prayers prevail, none of them all 595
Should see bright-charioted Aurora more.

Her answer'd then Penelope discreet.
Nurse ! they are odious all, for that alike
All teem with mischief ! but Antinoüs' looks
Remind me ever of the gloom of death. 600
A stranger hath arrived, who, begging, roams
The house (for so his penury enjoins) ;
The rest have given him, and have fill'd his bag
With viands, but Antinoüs hath bruised
His shoulder with a foot-stool hurl'd at him. 605

While thus the Queen conversing with her train
In her own chamber sat, Ulysses made
Plenteous repast. Then calling to her side
Eumæus, thus she signified her will.

Eumæus, noble friend ! bid now approach 610
Yon stranger. I would speak with him, and ask
If he have seen Ulysses, or have heard
Tidings, perchance, of the afflicted Chief,
For much a wanderer by his garb he seems.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply. 615
Were those Achaians silent, thou should'st hear,
O Queen ! a tale that would console thy heart.
Three nights I housed him, and within my cot
Three days detain'd him, (for his ship he left
A fugitive, and came direct to me,) 620
But half untold his history still remains.

As when his eye one fixes on a bard
From heaven instructed in such themes as charm
The ear of mortals, ever as he sings
The people press insatiable to hear, 625
So, in my cottage, seated at my side,

That stranger with his tale enchanted me.
 Laertes, he affirms, hath been his guest
 Erewhile in Crete, where Minos' race resides.
 And thence he hath arrived, after great loss, 630
 A suppliant to the very earth abased ;
 He adds, that in Thesprotia's neighbour realm
 He of Ulysses heard, both that he lives,
 And that he comes laden with riches home.

To whom Penelope, discreet, replied. 635
 Haste ; call him. I would hear myself his tale.
 Meantime, let these, or in the palace gate
 Sport jocular, or here ; their hearts are light,
 For their possessions are secure ; *their* wine
 None drinks, or eats *their* viands, save their own ; 640
 While my abode, day after day, themselves
 Haunting, my beeves and sheep, and fatted goats
 Slay for the banquet, and my casks exhaust
 Extravagant, whence endless waste ensues ;
 For no such friend as was Ulysses once 645
 Have I to expel the mischief. But might he
 Revisit once his native shores again,
 Then aided by his son, he should avenge,
 Incontinent, the wrongs which now I mourn.

Then sneezed Telemachus with sudden force, 650
 That all the palace rang ; his mother laugh'd,
 And in wing'd accents thus the swain bespake.

Haste—bid him hither—heard'st thou not the sneeze
 Propitious of my son ? oh might it prove
 A presage of inevitable death 655
 To all these revellers ! may none escape !
 Now mark me well. Should the event his tale
 Confirm, at my own hands he shall receive
 Mantle and tunic both for his reward.

She spake ; he went, and where Ulysses sat 660
 Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

Penelope, my venerable friend !
 Calls thee, the mother of Telemachus.
 Oppress'd by numerous troubles, she desires
 To ask thee tidings of her absent Lord. 665
 And should the event verify thy report,
 Thy meed shall be (a boon which much thou need'st)

Tunic and mantle ; but she gives no more ;
Thy sustenance⁶ thou must, as now, obtain,
Begging it at their hands who choose to give. 670

Then thus Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.

Eumæus ! readily I can relate
Truth, and truth only, to the prudent Queen
Icarius' daughter ; for of him I know
Much, and have suffer'd sorrows like his own. 675
But dread I feel of this imperious throng
Perverse, whose riot and outrageous acts
Of violence echo through the vault of heaven.

And even now, when for no fault of mine
Yon suitor struck me as I pass'd, and fill'd 680
My flesh with pain, neither Telemachus
Nor any interposed to stay his arm.

Now, therefore, let Penelope, although
Impatient, till the sun descend postpone
Her questions ; then she may enquire secure 685
When comes her husband, and may nearer place
My seat to the hearth-side, for thinly clad
Thou know'st I am, whose aid I first implored.

He ceased ; at whose reply Eumæus sought
Again the queen, but ere he yet had pass'd 690
The threshold, thus she greeted his return.

Comest thou alone, Eumæus ? why delays
The invited wanderer ? dreads he other harm ?
Or sees he aught that with a bashful awe
Fills him ? the bashful poor are poor indeed. 695

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
He hath well spoken ; none who would decline
The rudeness of this contumelious throng
Could answer otherwise ; thee he entreats
To wait till sun-set, and that course, O Queen, 700
Thou shalt thyself far more commodious find,
To hold thy conference with the guest, alone.

Then answer thus Penelope return'd.
The stranger, I perceive, is not unwise,
Whoe'er he be, for on the earth are none 705
Proud, insolent, and profligate as these.

⁶ This seems added by Eumæus to cut off from Ulysses the hope that might otherwise tempt him to use fiction.

So spake the Queen. Then (all his message told)
The good Eumæus to the suitors went
Again, and with his head inclined toward
Telemachus, lest others should his words
Witness, in accents wing'd him thus address'd. 710

Friend and kind master! I return to keep
My herds, and to attend my rural charge,
Whence we are both sustain'd. Keep thou, meantime,
All here with vigilance, but chiefly watch 715
For thy own good, and save *thyself* from harm;
For numerous here brood mischief, whom the Gods
Exterminate, ere yet their plots prevail!

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
So be it, father! and (thy evening-mess
Eaten) depart; to-morrow come again,
Bringing fair victims hither; I will keep, 720
I and the Gods, meantime, all here secure.

He ended; then resumed once more the swain
His polish'd seat, and both with wine and food 725
Now satiate, to his charge return'd, the court
Leaving and all the palace throng'd with guests;
They (for it now was evening) all alike
Turn'd jovial to the song and to the dance.

BOOK XVIII.

A R G U M E N T.

The beggar Irus arrives at the palace ; a combat takes place between him and Ulysses, in which Irus is by one blow vanquished. Penelope appears to the suitors, and having reminded them of the presents which she had a right to expect from them, receives a gift from each. Eury-machus, provoked by a speech of Ulysses, flings a footstool at him, which knocks down the cup-bearer ; a general tumult is the consequence, which continues until, by the advice of Telemachus, seconded by Amphinomus, the suitors retire to their respective homes.

Now came a public mendicant, a man
 Accustom'd, seeking alms, to roam the streets
 Of Ithaca ; one never sated yet
 With food or drink ; yet muscle had he none,
 Or strength of limb, though giant-built in show. 5
 Arnæus was the name which at his birth
 His mother gave him, but the youthful band
 Of suitors, whom as messenger he served,
 All named him Irus. He, arriving, sought
 To drive Ulysses forth from his own home, 10
 And in rough accents rude him thus rebuked.

Forth from the porch, old man ! lest by the foot
 I drag thee quickly forth. Seest not how all
 Wink on me, and by signs give me command
 To drag thee hence ? nor is it aught but shame 15
 That checks me. Yet arise, lest soon with fists
 Thou force me to adjust our difference.

To whom Ulysses, lowering dark, replied.
 Peace, fellow ! neither word nor deed of mine
 Wrongs thee, nor feel I envy at the boon, 20
 However plentiful, which thou receivest.
 The sill may hold us both ; thou dost not well
 To envy others ; thou appear'st like me
 A vagrant ; plenty is the gift of heaven.

But urge me not to trial of our fists,
 Lest thou provoke me, and I stain with blood
 Thy bosom and thy lips, old as I am.
 So, my attendance should to-morrow prove
 More tranquil here ; for thou should'st leave, I judge,
 Ulysses' mansion never to return.

25

30

Then answer'd Irus, kindling with disdain.
 Gods ! with what volubility of speech
 The table-hunter prates, like an old hag
 Collied with chimney-smutch ! but ah beware !
 For I intend thee mischief, and to dash
 With both hands every grinder from thy gums,
 As men untooth a pig pilfering the corn.
 Come—gird thee, that all here may view the strife—
 But how wilt thou oppose one young as I ?

35

40

Thus on the threshold of the lofty gate
 They, wrangling, chafed each other, whose dispute
 The high-born youth Antinoüs mark'd ; he laugh'd
 Delighted, and the suitors thus address'd.

Oh friends ! no pastime ever yet occur'd
 Pleasant as this which, now, the Gods themselves
 Afford us. Irus and the stranger brawl
 As they would box. Haste—let us urge them no.

45

He said ; at once loud-laughing all arose ;
 The ill-clad disputants they round about
 Encompass'd, and Antinoüs thus began.

50

Attend, ye noble suitors, to my voice.
 Two paunches lie of goats here on the fire,
 Which fill'd with fat and blood we set apart
 For supper ; he who conquers, and in force
 Superior proves, shall freely take the paunch
 Which he prefers, and shall with us thenceforth
 Feast always ; neither will we here admit
 Poor man beside to beg at our repasts.

55

He spake, whom all approved ; next, artful Chief
 Ulysses thus, dissembling, them address'd.

60

Princes ! unequal is the strife between
 A young man and an old with misery worn ;
 But hunger, always counsellor of ill,
 Me moves to fight, that many a bruise received,
 I may be foil'd at last. Now swear ye all

65

A solemn oath, that none, for Irus' sake,
Shall, interposing, smite me with his fist
Clandestine, forcing me to yield the prize.

He ceased, and, as he bade, all present swore
A solemn oath; then thus, amid them all 70
Standing, Telemachus majestic spake.

Guest! if thy courage and thy manly mind
Prompt thee to banish this man hence, no force
Fear thou beside, for who smites thee, shall find 75
Yet other foes to cope with; I am here
In the host's office, and the royal Chiefs
Eurymachus and Antinoüs, alike
Discreet, accord unanimous with me.

He ceased, whom all approved. Then, with his rags
Ulysses braced for decency his loins 80
Around, but gave to view his brawny thighs
Proportion'd fair, and stripp'd his shoulders broad,
His chest and arms robust; while, at his side,
Dilating more the Hero's limbs and more,
Minerva stood; the assembly with fix'd eyes 85
Astonish'd gazed on him, and looking full
On his next friend, a suitor thus remark'd.

Irus shall be in Irus found no more.
He hath pull'd evil on himself. What thewes
And what a haunch the senior's tatters hid! 90

So he,—meantime in Irus' heart arose
Horrible tumult; yet, his loins by force
Girding, the servants dragg'd him to the fight
Pale, and his flesh all quivering as he came;
Whose terrors thus Antinoüs sharp rebuked. 95

Now, wherefore livest, and why wast ever born,
Thou mountain-mass of earth! if such dismay
Shake thee at thought of combat with a man
Ancient as he, and worn with many woes?
But mark, I threaten not in vain; should he 100
O'ercome thee, and in force superior prove,
To Echetus thou goest; my sable bark
Shall waft thee to Epirus, where he reigns
Enemy of mankind; of nose and ears
He shall despoil thee with his ruthless steel, 105
And tearing by the roots the parts away

That mark thy sex, shall cast them to the dogs.¹

He said ; *His* limbs new terrors at that sound
 Shook under him ; into the middle space
 They led him, and each raised his hands on high. 110
 Then doubtful stood Ulysses toil-inured,
 Whether to strike him lifeless to the earth
 At once, or fell him with a managed blow.
 To smite with managed force at length he chose
 As wisest, lest, betray'd by his own strength, 115
 He should be known. With elevated fists
 Both stood ; him Irus on the shoulder struck,
 But he his adversary on the neck
 Pash'd close beneath his ear ; he split the bones,
 And blood in sable streams ran from his mouth. 120
 With many an hideous yell he dropp'd, his teeth
 Chatter'd, and with his heels he drumm'd the ground.
 The wooers, at that sight, lifting their hands
 In glad surprise, laugh'd all their breath away.
 Then through the vestibule, and right across 125
 The court, Ulysses dragg'd him by the foot
 Into the portico, where propping him
 Against the wall, and giving him his staff,
 In accents wing'd he bade him thus farewell.

There seated now, dogs drive and swine away, 130
 Nor claim (thyself so base) supreme control
 O'er other guests and mendicants, lest harm
 Reach thee, hereafter, heavier still than this.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
 He threw suspended by its leathern twist, 135
 And toward the threshold turning, sat again.
 They laughing ceaseless still, the palace-door
 Re-enter'd, and him, courteous, thus bespake.

Jove, and all Jove's assessors in the skies,
 Vouchsafe thee, stranger, whatsoe'er it be, 140
 Thy heart's desire ! who hast our ears relieved
 From that insatiate beggar's irksome tone.
 Soon to Epirus he shall go, dispatch'd
 To Echetus the King, pest of mankind.

¹ Tradition says that Echetus, for a love-affair, condemned his daughter to lose her eyes, and to grind iron barley-grains, while her lover was doomed to suffer what Antinous threatens to Irus. F.

So they ; to whose propitious words the Chief
Listen'd delighted. Then Antinoüs placed
The paunch before him, and Amphinomus
Two loaves, selected from the rest ; he fill'd
A goblet also, drank to him, and said,

My father, hail ! O stranger, be thy lot
Hereafter blest, though adverse now and hard !

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
To me, Amphinomus, endued thou seem'st
With much discretion, who art also son
Of such a sire, whose fair report I know,
Dulichian Nysus opulent and good.

Fame speaks thee his, and thou appear'st a man
Judicious ; hear me, therefore ; mark me well.
Earth nourishes, of all that breathe or creep,
No creature weak as man ; for while the Gods

Grant him prosperity and health, no fear
Hath he, or thought, that he shall ever mourn ;
But when the Gods with evils unforeseen
Smite him, he bears them with a grudging mind ;
For such as the complexion of his lot
By the appointment of the Sire of all,
Such is the colour of the mind of man.

I, too, have been familiar in my day
With wealth and ease, but I was then self-will'd,
And many wrong'd, embolden'd by the thought
Of my own father's and my brethren's power.

Let no man, therefore, be unjust, but each
Use modestly what gift soe'er of heaven.
So do not these. These ever bent I see
On deeds injurious, the possessions large
Consuming, and dishonouring the wife

Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain
Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,
Even at the door. Thee, therefore, may the Gods
Steal hence in time ; ah, meet not his return
To his own country ! for they will not part
(He and the suitors) without blood, I think,
If once he enter at these gates again !

He ended, and libation pouring, quaff'd
The generous juice, then in the prince's hand

Replaced the cup ; he, pensive, and his head
 Inclining low, pass'd from him ; for his heart
 Foreboded ill ; yet 'scaped not even he,
 But in the snare of Pallas caught, his life
 To the heroic arm and spear resign'd 190
 Of brave Telemachus. Reaching, at length,
 The seat whence he had risen, he sat again.

Minerva then, Goddess cœrulean-eyed,
 Prompted Icarius' daughter to appear
 Before the suitors ; so to expose the more 195
 Their drift iniquitous, and that herself
 More bright than ever in her husband's eyes
 Might shine, and in her son's. Much mirth she feign'd²,
 And bursting into laughter, thus began.

I wish, Eurynome ! (who never felt 200
 That wish till now) though I detest them all,
 To appear before the suitors, in whose ears
 I will admonish, for his good, my son,
 Not to associate with that lawless crew
 Too much, who speak him fair, but foul intend. 205

Then answer thus Eurynome return'd.
 My daughter ! wisely hast thou said and well.
 Go ! bathe thee and anoint thy face, then give
 To thy dear son such counsel as thou wilt
 Without reserve ; but show not there thy cheeks 210
 Sullied with tears, for profit none accrues
 From grief like thine, that never knows a change.
 And he is now bearded, and hath attain'd
 That age which thou wast wont with warmest prayer
 To implore the Gods that he might live to see. 215

Her answer'd, then, Penelope discreet.
 Persuade not me, though studious of my good,
 To bathe, Eurynome ! or to anoint
 My face with oil ; for all my charms the Gods,
 Inhabitants of Olympus, then destroy'd 220
 When he, embarking, left me. Go, command
 Hippodamia and Autonoe
 That they attend me to the hall, and wait
 Beside me there ; for decency forbids
 That I should enter to the men alone. 225

² This seems the sort of laughter intended by the word Ἀχρητον.

She ceased, and through the house the ancient dame
Hasted to summon whom she had enjoin'd.

But Pallas, Goddess of the azure eyes,
Diffused, meantime, the kindly dew of sleep
Around Icarius' daughter; on her couch 230
Reclining, soon as she reclined, she dozed,
And yielded to soft slumber all her frame.

Then, that the suitors might admire her more,
The glorious Goddess clothed her, as she lay,
With beauty of the skies; her lovely face 235

She with ambrosia purified, with such
As Cytherea chaplet-crown'd employs
Herself, when in the eye-ensnaring dance
She joins the Graces; to a statelier height
Beneath her touch, an ampler size she grew, 240
And fairer than the elephantine bone
Fresh from the carver's hand. These gifts conferr'd
Divine, the awful Deity retired.

And now, loud-prattling as they came, arrived
Her handmaids; sleep forsook her at the sound, 245
She wiped away a tear, and thus she said.

Me gentle sleep, sad mourner as I am,
Hath here involved. O would that by a death
As gentle chaste Diana would herself
This moment set me free, that I might waste 250
My life no longer in heart-felt regret
Of a lamented husband's various worth
And virtue, for in Greece no Peer had he!

She said, and through her chamber's stately door
Issuing, descended; neither went she sole, 255
But with those two fair menials of her train.

Arriving, most majestic of her sex,
In presence of the numerous guests beneath
The portal of the stately dome she stood
Between her maidens, with her lucid veil 260

Mantling her lovely cheeks. Then every knee
Trembled, and every heart with amorous heat
Dissolved, her charms all coveting alike,
While to Telemachus her son she spake.

Telemachus! thou art no longer wise 265
As once thou wast, and even when a child.

For thriven as thou art, and at full size
 Arrived of man, so fair-proportion'd too,
 That even a stranger, looking on thy growth
 And beauty, would pronounce thee nobly born,
 Yet is thy intellect still immature. 270

For what is this? why suffer'st thou a guest
 To be abused in thy own palace? how?
 Knowest not that if the stranger seated here
 Endure vexation, the disgrace is thine? 275

Her answer'd then Telemachus discreet.
 I blame thee not, my mother, that thou feel'st
 Thine anger moved; yet want I not a mind
 Able to mark and to discern between
 Evil and good, child as I lately was, 280
 Although I find not promptitude of thought
 Sufficient always, overawed and check'd
 By such a multitude, all bent alike
 On mischief, of whom none takes part with me.
 But Irus and the stranger have not fought, 285
 Urged by the suitors, and the stranger proved
 Victorious; yes—Heaven knows how much I wish
 That, (in the palace some, some in the court,)
 The suitors all sat vanquish'd, with their heads
 Depending low, and with enfeebled limbs, 290
 Even as that same Irus, while I speak
 With chin on bosom propp'd at the hall-gate
 Sits drunkard-like, incapable to stand
 Erect, or to regain his proper home.

So they; and now addressing to the Queen
 His speech, Eurymachus thus interposed. 295

O daughter of Icarius! could all eyes
 Throughout Iasian³ Argos view thy charms,
 Discreet Penelope! more suitors still
 Assembling in thy courts would banquet here 300
 From morn to eve; for thou surpassest far
 In beauty, stature, worth, all womankind.

To whom replied Penelope discreet.
 The Gods, Eurymachus! reduced to nought
 My virtue, beauty, stature, when the Greeks,
 Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy. 305

³ From Iäsus, once King of Peloponnesus.

Could he, returning, my domestic charge
Himself intend, far better would my fame
Be so secured, and wider far diffused.
But I am wretched now, such storms the Gods
Of woe have sent me. When he left his home,
Clasping my wrist with his right hand, he said.

310

My love! for I imagine not that all
The warrior Greeks shall safe from Troy return,
Since fame reports the Trojans brave in fight,
Skill'd in the spear, mighty to draw the bow,
And nimble vaulters to the backs of steeds
High-mettled, which to speediest issue bring
The dreadful struggle of all-wasting war,—
I know not, therefore, whether Heaven intend
My safe return, or I must perish there.
But manage thou at home. Cherish, as now,
While I am absent, or more dearly still
My parents, and what time our son thou seest
Mature, then wed; wed even whom thou wilt,
And hence to a new home.—Such were his words,

315

All which shall full accomplishment ere long
Receive. The day is near, when hapless I,
Lost to all comfort by the will of Jove,
Must meet the nuptials that my soul abhors.

320

325

330

But this thought now afflicts me, and my mind
Continual haunts. Such was not heretofore
The suitors custom'd practice; all who chose
To engage in competition for a wife
Well-qualitied and well-endow'd, produced
From their own herds and fatted flocks a feast
For the bride's friends, and splendid presents made,
But never ate as ye, at others' cost.

335

She ceased; then brave Ulysses, toil-inured,
Rejoiced that, soothing them, she sought to draw
From each some gift, although on other views,
And more important far, himself intent.

340

Then thus Antinoüs, Eupithes' son.
Icarius' daughter wise! only accept
Such gifts as we shall bring, for gifts demand
That grace, nor can be decently refused;
But to our rural labours, or elsewhere

345

Depart not we, till first thy choice be made
Of the Achaian, chief in thy esteem.

Antinoüs spake, whose answer all approved. 350

Then each dispatch'd his herald who should bring
His master's gift. Antinoüs' herald, first,
A mantle of surpassing beauty brought,
Wide, various, with no fewer clasps adorn'd
Than twelve, all golden, and to every clasp 355
Was fitted opposite its eye exact.

Next, to Eurymachus his herald bore
A necklace of wrought gold, with amber rich
Bestudded, every bead bright as a sun.

Two servants for Eurydamas produced 360

Ear-pendants fashion'd with laborious art,
Broad, triple-gemm'd, of brilliant light profuse,
The herald of Polyctor's son, the prince
Pisander, brought a collar to his Lord,
A sumptuous ornament. Each Grecian gave, 365
And each a gift dissimilar from all.

Then, loveliest of her sex, turning away,
She sought her chamber, whom her maidens fair
Attended, charged with those illustrious gifts.

Then turn'd they all to dance and pleasant song 370
Joyous, expecting the approach of even.

Ere long the dusky evening came, and them
Found sporting still. Then, placing in the hall
Three hearths, that should illumine wide the house,
They compass'd them around with fuel-wood 375

Long-season'd and new-split, mingling the sticks
With torches. The attendant women watch'd
And fed those fires by turns, to whom, himself,
Their unknown Sovereign thus his speech address'd.

Ye maidens of the long regretted Chief 380
Ulysses! to the inner courts retire,

And to your virtuous Queen, that following there
Your several tasks, spinning and combing wool,
Ye may amuse her; I, meantime, for these
Will furnish light, and should they choose to stay 385
Till golden morn appear, they shall not tire
My patience aught, for I can much endure.

He said; they tittering on each other gazed.

But one, Melantho with the blooming cheeks,
Rebuked him rudely. Dolius was her sire, 390
But by Penelope she had been rear'd
With care maternal, and in infant years
Supplied with many a toy ; yet even she
Felt not her mistress' sorrows in her heart,
But of Eurymachus enamour'd, oft 395
His lewd embraces met ; she, with sharp speech
Reproachful, to Ulysses thus replied.

Why, what a brainsick vagabond art thou !
Who neither wilt to the smith's forge retire
For sleep, nor to the public portico, 400
But here remaining, with audacious prate
Disturb'st this numerous company, restrain'd
By no respect or fear ; either thou art
With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
Art always fool, and therefore babblest now. 405
Say, art thou drunk with joy, that thou hast foil'd
The beggar Irus ? Tremble, lest a man
Stronger than Irus suddenly arise,
Who on thy temples pelting thee with blows
Far heavier than his, shall drive thee hence 410
With many a bruise, and foul with thy own blood.

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.
Snarler ! Telemachus shall be inform'd
This moment of thy eloquent harangue,
That he may hew thee for it, limb from limb. 415

So saying, he scared the women ; back they flew
Into the house, but each with faltering knees
Through dread, for they believed his threats sincere.
He then illumined by the triple blaze
Watch'd close the lights, busy from hearth to hearth, 420
But in his soul, meantime, far other thoughts
Revolved, tremendous, not conceived in vain.

Nor Pallas (that they might exasperate more
Laertes' son) permitted to abstain
From heart-corroding bitterness of speech 425
Those suitors proud, of whom Eurymachus,
Offspring of Polybus, while thus he jeer'd
Ulysses, set the others in a roar.

Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen !

I shall promulge my thought. This man, methinks, 430
Not uncondacted by the Gods, hath reach'd
Ulysses' mansion, for to me the light
Of yonder torches altogether seems
His own, an emanation from his head,
Which not the smallest growth of hair obscures. 435

He ended ; and the city-waster Chief
Himself accosted next. Art thou disposed
To serve me, friend ! would I afford thee hire,
A labourer at my farm ? thou shalt not want
Sufficient wages ; thou may'st there collect 440
Stones for my fences, and may'st plant my oaks,
For which I would supply thee all the year
With food, and clothes, and sandals for thy feet.
But thou hast learn'd less creditable arts,
Nor hast a will to work, preferring much 445
By beggary from others to extort
Wherewith to feed thy never-sated maw.

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Forbear, Eurymachus ; for were we match'd
In work against each other, thou and I, 450
Mowing in spring-time, when the days are long,
I with my well-bent sickle in my hand,
Thou arm'd with one as keen, for trial sake
Of our ability to toil unfed
Till night, grass still sufficing for the proof ; 455
Or if, again, it were our task to drive
Yoked oxen of the noblest breed, sleek-hair'd,
Big-limb'd, both batten'd to the full with grass,
Their age and aptitude for work the same,
Not soon to be fatigued, and were the field 460
In size four acres, with a glebe through which
The share might smoothly slide, then should'st thou see
How straight my furrow should be cut and true.

Or should Saturnian Jove this day excite
Here, battle, or elsewhere, and were I arm'd 465
With two bright spears and with a shield, and bore
A brazen casque well-fitted to my brows,
Me then thou should'st perceive mingling in fight
Amid the foremost Chiefs, nor with the crime
Of idle beggary should'st upbraid me more. 470

But thou art much a railer, one whose heart
Pity moves not, and seem'st a mighty man
And valiant to thyself, only because
Thou herd'st with few, and those of little worth.
But should Ulysses come, at his own isle 475
Again arrived, wide as these portals are,
To thee, at once, too narrow they should seem
To shoot thee forth with speed enough abroad.

He ceased—then tenfold indignation fired
Eurymachus; he furrow'd deep his brow 480
With frowns, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Wretch, I shall roughly handle thee anon,
Who thus with fluent prate presumptuous darest
Disturb this numerous company, restrain'd
By no respect or fear. Either thou art 485
With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
Art always fool, and therefore babblest now;
Or thou art frantic haply with delight
That thou hast foil'd yon vagabond obscure.

So saying, he seized a stool; but to the knees 490
Ulysses flew of the Dulichian Prince
Amphinomus, and sat, fearing incensed
Eurymachus; he on his better hand
Smote full the cup-bearer; on the hall-floor
Loud rang the fallen beaker, and himself 495
Lay on his back clamouring in the dust.
Straight through the dusky hall tumult ensued
Among the suitors, of whom thus, a youth,
With eyes directed to the next, exclaim'd.

Would that this rambling stranger had elsewhere 500
Perish'd, or ever he had here arrived,
Then no such uproar had he caused as this!
This doth the beggar; he it is for whom
We wrangle thus, and may despair of peace
Or pleasure more; now look for strife alone. 505

Then in the midst Telemachus upstood
Majestic, and the suitors thus bespake.
Sirs! ye are mad, and can no longer eat
Or drink in peace; some demon troubles you.
But since ye all have feasted, to your homes 510
Go now, and, at your pleasure, to your beds;

Soonest were best, but I thrust no man hence.

He ceased ; they gnawing stood their lips, aghast
With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
Such boldness used. Then rose Amphinomus,
Brave son of Nisus, offspring of the King
Aretus, and the assembly thus address'd.

515

My friends ! let none with contradiction thwart
And rude reply words rational and just ;
Assault no more the stranger, nor of all
The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
Harm any. Come. Let the cup-bearer fill
To all, that due libation made, to rest
We may repair at home, leaving the Prince
To accommodate beneath his father's roof
The stranger, for he is the Prince's guest.

520

525

He ended, whose advice none disapproved.
The Hero Mulus then, Dulichian-born,
And herald of Amphinomus, the cup
Filling, dispensed it, as he stood, to all ;
They, pouring forth to the Immortals, quaff'd
The luscious beverage, and when each had made
Libation, and such measure as he would
Of wine had drunk, then all to rest retired.

530

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses and Telemachus remove the arms from the hall to an upper-chamber. The Hero then confers with Penelope, to whom he gives a fictitious narrative of his adventures. Euryclea, while bathing Ulysses, discovers him by a scar on his knee, but he prevents her communication of that discovery to Penelope.

THEY went, but left the noble Chief behind
In his own house, contriving, by the aid
Of Pallas, the destruction of them all,
And thus, in accents wing'd, again he said:

My son! we must remove and safe dispose 5
All these my well-forged implements of war;
And should the suitors, missing them, enquire
Where are they? thou shalt answer smoothly thus—
I have convey'd them from the reach of smoke,
For they appear no more the same which erst 10
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
So smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
Some God suggested to me,—lest, inflamed
With wine, ye wound each other in your brawls, 15
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.

He ceased, and in obedience to his will,
Calling the ancient Euryclea forth,
His nurse, Telemachus enjoin'd her thus. 20

Go—shut the women in; make fast the doors
Of their apartment, while I safe dispose
Elsewhere my father's implements of war,
Which, during his long absence, here have stood
Till smoke hath sullied them. For I have been 25
An infant hitherto, but wiser grown,
Would now remove them from the breath of fire.

Then thus the gentle matron in return.
Yes truly,—and I wish that now, at length,
Thou would'st assert the privilege of thy years, 30
My son, thyself assuming charge of all,
Both house and stores ; but who shall bear the light ?
Since they, it seems, who would, are all forbidden.

To whom Telemachus discreet replied.
This guest ; for no man, from my table fed, 35
Come whence he may, shall be an idler here.

He ended, nor his words flew wing'd away,
But Euryclea bolted every door.
Then, starting to the task, Ulysses caught,
And his illustrious son, the weapons thence, 40
Helmet, and bossy shield, and pointed spear,
While Pallas from a golden lamp illumed
The dusky way before them. At that sight
Alarm'd, the Prince his father thus address'd.

Whence—whence is this, my father ? I behold 45
A prodigy ! the walls of the whole house,
The arches, fir-tree beams, and pillars tall
Shine in my view, as with the blaze of fire !
Some Power celestial, doubtless, is within.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied, 50
Soft ! ask no questions. Give no vent to thought.
Such is the custom of the Powers' divine.
Hence, thou, to bed. I stay, that I may yet
Both in thy mother and her maidens move
More curiosity ; yes—she with tears 55
Shall question me of all that I have seen.

He ended, and the Prince, at his command,
Guided by flaming torches, sought the couch
Where he was wont to sleep, and there he slept
On that night also, waiting the approach 60
Of sacred dawn. Thus was Ulysses left
Alone, and planning sat in solitude,
By Pallas' aid, the slaughter of his foes.

At length, Diana-like, or like herself 65
All golden Venus, (her apartment left,)
Enter'd Penelope. Beside the hearth
Her women planted her accustom'd seat
With silver wreathed and ivory. That throne

Iemalius made, artist renown'd, and join'd
A footstool to its splendid frame beneath, 70
Which ever with an ample fleece they spread.
There sat discreet Penelope; then came
Her beautiful attendants from within,
Who clear'd the litter'd bread, the board, and cups
From which the insolent companions drank. 75
They also raked the embers from the hearths
Now dim, and with fresh billets piled them high,
Both for illumination and for warmth.
Then yet again Melanths with rude speech
Opprobrious, thus assail'd Ulysses' ear. 80

Guest—wilt thou trouble us throughout the night
Ranging the house? and linger'st thou a spy
Watching the women? Hence—get thee abroad,
Glad of such fare as thou hast found, or soon
With torches beaten we will thrust thee forth. 85

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.
Petulant woman! wherefore thus incensed
Inveigh'st thou against me? is it because
I am not sleek? because my garb is mean?
Because I beg? thanks to necessity— 90
I would not else. But such as I appear,
Such all who beg and all who wander are.
I also lived the happy owner once
Of such a stately mansion, and have given
To numerous wanderers, whencesoe'er they came, 95
All that they needed; I was also served
By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
The envied owner opulent and blest.
But Jove (for so it pleased him) hath reduced
My all to nothing. Therefore well beware 100
Thou also, mistress! lest a day arrive
When all these charms by which thou shinest among
Thy sister-menials, fade; fear, too, lest her
Thou should'st perchance irritate, whom thou servest,
And lest Ulysses come, of whose return 105
Hope yet survives; but even though the Chief
Have perish'd, as ye think, and comes no more,
Consider yet his son, how bright the gifts
Shine of Apollo in the illustrious Prince

- Telemachus ; no woman, unobserved 110
By him, can now commit a trespass here ;
His days of heedless infancy are past.
He ended, whom Penelope discreet
O'erhearing, her attendant sharp rebuked.
Shameless, audacious woman ! known to me 115
Is thy great wickedness, which with thy life
Thou shalt atone ; for thou wast well aware,
(Hearing it from myself,) that I design'd
To ask this stranger of my absent Lord,
For whose dear sake I never cease to mourn. 120
Then to her household's governess she said ;
Bring now a seat, and spread it with a fleece,
Eurynome ! that, undisturb'd, the guest
May hear and answer all that I shall ask.
She ended. Then the matron brought in haste 125
A polish'd seat, and spread it with a fleece,
On which the toil-accustom'd Hero sat,
And thus the chaste Penelope began.
Stranger ! my first enquiry shall be this—
Who art thou ? whence ? where born, and sprung from whom ?
Then answer thus Ulysses, wise, return'd. 131
O Queen ! uncensurable by the lips
Of mortal man ! thy glory climbs the skies
Unrivall'd, like the praise of some great King
Who o'er a numerous people and renown'd 135
Presiding like a Deity, maintains
Justice and truth. The earth, under his sway,
Her produce yields abundantly ; the trees
Fruit-laden bend ; the lusty flocks bring forth ;
The Ocean teems with finny swarms beneath 140
His just control, and all the land is blest.
Me therefore question of what else thou wilt
In thy own palace, but forbear to ask
From whom I sprang, and of my native land,
Lest thou, reminding me of those sad themes, 145
Augment my woes ; for I have much endured ;
Nor were it seemly, in another's house,
To pass the hours in sorrow and in tears,
Wearisome when indulged with no regard
To time or place ; thy train (perchance thyself) 150

Would blame me, and I should reproach incur
As one tear-deluged through excess of wine.

Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.

The immortal Gods, O stranger, then destroy'd
My form, my grace, my beauty, when the Greeks 155
Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.

Could he, returning, my domestic charge
Himself intend, far better would my fame
Be so secured, and wider far diffused.

But I am wretched now, such storms of woe 160
The Gods have sent me ; for as many Chiefs

As hold dominion in the neighbour isles

Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd

Zacynthus ; others, also, rulers here 165
In pleasant Ithaca, me, loth to wed,

Woo ceaseless, and my household stores consume.

I, therefore, neither guest nor suppliant heed,

Nor public herald more, but with regret

Of my Ulysses wear my soul away.

They, meantime, press my nuptials, which by art 170
I still procrastinate. Some God the thought

Suggested to me, to commence a robe

Of amplest measure and of subtlest woof,

Laborious task ; which done, I thus address'd them.

Princes, my suitors ! since the noble Chief 175
Ulysses is no more, enforce not now

My nuptials ; wait till I shall finish first

A funeral robe, (lest all my threads be marr'd,)

Which for the ancient Hero I prepare

Laertes, looking for the mournful hour 180
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest.

Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,

Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.

Such was my speech ; they, unsuspecting all,

With my request complied. Thenceforth, all day 185
I wove the ample web, and, by the aid

Of torches, ravell'd it again at night.

Three years by artifice I thus their suit

Eluded safe ; but when the fourth arrived,

And the same season after many moons 190

And fleeting days return'd, passing my train

Who had neglected to release the dogs,
 They came, surprised, and reprimanded me.
 Thus, through necessity, not choice, at last
 I have perform'd it, in my own despite. 195
 But no escape from marriage now remains,
 Nor other subterfuge for me ; meantime
 My parents urge my nuptials, and my son
 (Of age to note it) with disgust observes
 His wealth consumed ; for he is now become 200
 Adult, and abler than myself to rule
 The house, a Prince distinguish'd by the Gods.
 Yet, stranger, after all, speak thy descent ;
 Say whence thou art ; for not of fabulous birth
 Art thou, nor from the oak, nor from the rock. 205
 Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
 O spouse revered of Laertiades !
 Resolvest thou still to learn from whom I sprang ?
 Learn then ; but know that thou shalt much augment
 My present grief, natural to a man 210
 Who hath, like me, long exiled from his home
 Through various cities of the sons of men
 Wander'd remote, and numerous woes endured.
 Yet, though it pain me, I will tell thee all.
 There is a land amid the sable flood 215
 Call'd Crete ; fair, fruitful, circled by the sea.
 Numerous are her inhabitants, a race
 Not to be summ'd, and ninety towns she boasts.
 Diverse their language is ; Achaians some,
 And some indigenous are ; Cydonians there, 220
 Crest-shaking Dorians, and Pelasgians dwell.
 One city in extent the rest exceeds,
 Cnossus ; the city in which Minos reign'd,
 Who, ever at a nine-years-close, conferr'd
 With Jove himself ; from him my father sprang, 225
 The brave Deucalion ; for Deucalion's sons
 Were two, myself and King Idomeneus.
 To Ilium he, on board his gallant barks
 Follow'd the Atridæ. I, the youngest-born,
 By my illustrious name, Æthon, am known, 230
 But he ranks foremost both in worth and years.
 There I beheld Ulysses, and within

My walls received him ; for a violent wind
Had driven him from Malea (while he sought
The shores of Troy) to Crete. The storm his barks 233
Bore into the Amnisus, for the cave
Of Ilythia known, a dangerous port,
And which with difficulty he attain'd.
He, landing, instant to the city went,
Seeking Idomeneus ; his friend of old, 240
As he affirm'd, and one whom much he loved.
But *he* was far remote, ten days advanced,
Perhaps eleven, on his course to Troy.
Him therefore I conducted to my home,
Where hospitably, and with kindest care 245
I entertain'd him (for I wanted nought),
And for himself procured and for his band,
By public contribution, corn, and wine,
And beeves for food, that all might be sufficed.
Twelve days his noble Grecians there abode, 250
Port-lock'd by Boreas blowing with a force
Resistless even on the land, some God
So roused his fury ; but the thirteenth day
The wind all fell, and they embark'd again.
With many a fiction specious, as he sat, 255
He thus her ear amused ; she at the sound
Melting, with fluent tears her cheeks bedew'd ;
And as the snow by Zephyrus diffused,
Melts on the mountain tops, when Eurys breathes,
And fills the channels of the running streams, 260
So melted she, and down her lovely cheeks
Pour'd fast the tears, him mourning as remote
Who sat beside her. Soft compassion touch'd
Ulysses of his consort's silent woe ;
His eyes, as they had been of steel or horn, 265
Moved not, yet artful, he suppress'd his tears,
And she, at length, with overflowing grief
Satiated, replied, and thus enquired again.
Now, stranger, I shall prove thee, as I judge,
If thou, indeed, hast entertain'd in Crete 270
My spouse and his brave followers, as thou say'st.
Describe his raiment and himself ; his own
Appearance, and the appearance of his friends.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 Hard is the task, O Queen ! (so long a time 275
 Hath since elapsed,) to tell thee. Twenty years
 Have pass'd since he forsook my native isle,
 Yet, from my best remembrance, I will give
 A likeness of him, such as now I may.
 A double cloak, thick-piled, Mæonian-dyed, 280
 The noble Chief had on ; two fastenings held
 The golden clasp, and it display'd in front
 A well-wrought pattern with much art design'd.
 An hound between his fore-feet holding fast
 A dappled fawn, gaped eager on his prey. 285
 All wonder'd, seeing how in lifeless gold
 Express'd, the dog with open mouth her throat
 Attempted still, and how the fawn with hoofs
 Thrust trembling forward, struggled to escape.
 That glorious mantle much I noticed, soft 290
 To touch, as the dried garlick's glossy film ;
 Such was the smoothness of it, and it shone
 Sun-bright ; full many a maiden, trust me, view'd
 The splendid texture with admiring eyes.
 But mark me now ; deep treasure in thy mind 295
 This word. I know not if, Ulysses wore
 That cloak at home, or whether of his train
 Some warrior gave it to him on his way,
 Or else some host of his ; for many loved
 Ulysses, and with him might few compare. 300
 I gave to him, myself, a brazen sword,
 A purple cloak magnificent, and vest
 Of royal length, and, when he sought his bark,
 With princely pomp dismiss'd him from the shore.
 An herald also waited on the Chief, 305
 Somewhat his senior ; him I next describe.
 His back was bunch'd, his visage swarthy, curl'd
 His poll, and he was named Eurybates ;
 A man whom most of all his followers far
 Ulysses honour'd, for their minds were one. 310

He ceased ; she, recognizing all the proofs
 Distinctly by Ulysses named, was moved
 Still more to weep, till with o'erflowing grief
 Sate, at length she answer'd him again.

Henceforth, O stranger, thou who hadst before 315
My pity, shalt my reverence share and love.
I folded for him with these hands the cloak
Which thou describest, produced it when he went,
And gave it to him ; I that splendid clasp
Attach'd to it myself, more to adorn 320
My honour'd Lord, whom to his native land
Return'd secure I shall receive no more.
In such an evil hour Ulysses went
To that bad city never to be named.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 325
Consort revered of Laertiades !
No longer let anxiety impair
Thy beauteous form, nor any grief consume
Thy spirits more for thy Ulysses' sake.
And yet I blame thee not ; a wife deprived 330
Of her first mate, to whom she had produced
Fair fruit of mutual love, would mourn his loss,
Although he were inferior far to thine,
Whom fame affirms the semblance of the Gods.
But cease to mourn. Hear me. I will relate 335
A faithful tale, nor will from thee withhold
Such tidings of Ulysses living still,
And of his safe return, as I have heard
Lately, in yon neighbouring opulent land
Of the Thesprotians. He returns enrich'd 340
With many precious stores from those obtain'd
Whom he hath visited ; but he hath lost,
Departing from Thrinacia's isle, his bark
And all his loved companions in the Deep,
For Jove was adverse to him, and the Sun, 345
Whose beeves his followers slew. They perish'd all
Amid the billowy flood ; but Him, the keel
Bestriding of his bark, the waves at length
Cast forth on the Phæacian's land, a race
Allied to heaven, who revered like a God 350
Thy husband, honour'd him with numerous gifts,
And willing were to have convey'd him home.
Ulysses, therefore, had attain'd long since
His native shore, but that he deem'd it best
To travel far, that he might still amass 355

More wealth ; so much Ulysses all mankind
 Excels in policy, and hath no peer.
 This information from Thesprotia's King
 I gain'd, from Phidon ; to myself he swore
 Libation offering under his own roof, 360
 That both the bark was launch'd, and the stout crew
 Prepared, that should conduct him to his home.
 But me he first dismiss'd ; for, as it chanced,
 A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
 To corn-enrich'd Dulichium. All the wealth 365
 He shew'd me by the Chief amass'd, a store
 To feed the house of yet another Prince
 To the tenth generation ; so immense
 His treasures were within that palace lodged.
 Himself he said was to Dodona gone, 370
 Counsel to ask from the oracular oaks
 Sublime of Jove, how safest he might seek,
 After long exile thence, his native land,
 If openly were best, or in disguise.
 Thus, therefore, he is safe, and at his home 375
 Well-nigh arrived, nor shall his country long
 Want him. I swear it with a solemn oath.
 First Jove be witness, King and Lord of all !
 Next these domestic Gods of the renown'd
 Ulysses, in whose royal house I sit, 380
 That thou shalt see my saying all fulfill'd.
 Ulysses shall this self-same year return,
 This self-same month, ere yet the next begin.
 Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.
 Grant heaven, my guest, that this good word of thine 385
 Fail not ! then, soon shalt thou such bounty share
 And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,
 Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.
 But ah ! my soul forebodes how it will prove ;
 Neither Ulysses will return, nor thou 390
 Receive safe conduct hence ; for we have here
 None, such as once Ulysses was, to rule
 His household with authority, and to send
 With honourable convoy to his home
 The worthy guest, or to regale him here. 395
 Give him the bath, my maidens ; spread his couch

With linen soft, with fleecy gaberdines¹
 And rugs of splendid hue, that he may lie
 Waiting, well-warm'd, the golden morn's return.
 Attend him also at the peep of day 400
 With bath and unction, that, his seat resumed
 Here in the palace, he may be prepared
 For breakfast with Telemachus ; and woe
 To him who shall presume to incommode
 Or cause him pain ; that man shall be cashier'd 405
 Hence instant, burn his anger as it may.
 For how, my honour'd inmate ! shalt thou learn
 That I in wisdom economic aught
 Pass other women, if unbathed, unoil'd,
 Ill-clad, thou sojourn here ? man's life is short. 410
 Whoso is cruel, and to cruel arts
 Addict, on him all men, while yet he lives,
 Call plagues and curses down, and after death
 Scorn and proverbial mockeries hunt his name.
 But men, humane themselves, and given by choice 415
 To offices humane, from land to land
 Are rumour'd honourably by their guests,
 And every tongue is busy in their praise.
 Her answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise.
 Consort revered of Laertiades ! 420
 Warm gaberdines and rugs of splendid hue
 To me have odious been, since first the sight
 Of Crete's snow-mantled mountain-tops I lost,
 Sweeping the billows with extended oars.
 No ; I will pass as I am wont to pass 425
 The sleepless night ; for on a sordid couch
 Outstretch'd, full many a night have I reposed
 Till golden-charioted Aurora dawn'd.
 Nor me the foot-bath pleases more ; my foot
 Shall none of all thy ministering maidens touch, 430
 Unless there be some ancient matron grave
 Among them, who hath pangs of heart endured
 Numerous, and keen as I have felt myself ;
 Her I refuse not. She may touch my feet.
 Him answer'd then prudent Penelope. 435

¹ A gaberdine is a shaggy cloak of coarse but warm materials. Such always make part of Homer's bed-furniture.

Dear guest ! for of all travellers here arrived
 From distant regions, I have none received
 Discreet as thou, or whom I more have loved,
 So just thy matter is, and with such grace
 Express'd,—I have an ancient maiden grave, 440
 The nurse who at my hapless husband's birth
 Received him in her arms, and with kind care
 Maternal rear'd him ; she shall wash thy feet,
 Although decrepit. Euryclea, rise !

Wash one coeval with thy Lord ; for such 445
 The feet and hands, it may be, are become
 Of my Ulysses now ; since man beset
 With sorrow once, soon wrinkled grows and old.

She said, then Euryclea with both hands
 Covering her face, in tepid tears profuse 450
 Dissolved, and thus in mournful strains began.

Alas ! my son, trouble for thy dear sake
 Distracts me. Jove surely of all mankind
 Thee hated most, though ever in thy heart
 Devoutly given ; for never mortal man 455

So many thighs of fatted victims burn'd,
 And chosen hecatombs produced as thou
 To Jove the Thunderer, him entreating still
 That he would grant thee a serene old age,
 And to instruct, thyself, thy glorious son. 460

Yet thus the God requites thee, cutting off
 All hope of thy return :—oh ancient sir !
 Him too, perchance, where'er he sits a guest
 Beneath some foreign roof, the women taunt,
 As all these shameless ones have taunted thee, 465
 Fearing whose mockery thou forbidd'st their hands
 This office, which Icarius' daughter wise

To me enjoins, and which I, glad, perform.
 Yes, I will wash thy feet ; both for her sake
 And for thy own,—for sight of thee hath raised 470
 A tempest in my mind. Hear now the cause !

Full many a guest forlorn we entertain,
 But never any have I seen, whose size,
 The fashion of whose foot, and pitch of voice,
 Such likeness of Ulysses show'd, as thine. 475

To whom Ulysses, ever-shrewd, replied.

Such close similitude, O ancient dame !
As thou observest between thy Lord and me,
All who have seen us both, have ever found.

He said ; then taking the resplendent vase 480
Allotted always to that use, she first

Infused cold water largely, then the warm.

Ulysses (for beside the hearth he sat)

Turn'd quick his face into the shade, alarm'd
Lest, handling him, she should at once remark 485
His scar, and all his stratagem unveil.

She then, approaching, minister'd the bath

To her own King, and at first touch discern'd

That token, by a bright-tusk'd boar of old
Impress'd, what time he to Parnassus went 490

To visit there Autolycus and his sons,

His mother's noble sire, who all mankind

In furtive arts and fraudulent oaths excell'd.²

For such endowments he by gifts received

From Hermes' self, to whom the thighs of kids 495

He offer'd and of lambs, and, in return,

The watchful Hermes never left his side.

Autolycus, arriving in the isle

Of pleasant Ithaca, the new-born son

Of his own daughter found, whom on his knees 500

At close of supper Euryclea placed,

And thus the royal visitant address'd.

Thyself, Autolycus ! devise a name

For thy own daughter's son, by numerous prayers

Of thine and fervent, from the Gods obtained. 505

Then answer thus Autolycus return'd.

My daughter and my daughter's spouse ! the name

Which I shall give your boy, that let him bear.

Since after provocation and offence

To numbers given of either sex, I come, 510

Call him Ulysses ;³ and, when grown mature,

² Homer's morals seem to allow to a good man dissimulation, and even an ambiguous oath, should they be necessary to save him from a villain. Thus in Book XX. Telemachus swears by Zeus, that he does not hinder his mother from marrying whom she pleases of the wooers, though at the same time he is plotting their destruction with his father. F.

³ In the Greek 'ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ' from the verb 'οδυσσω—Irascor, I am angry.

He shall Parnassus visit, the abode
Magnificent in which his mother dwelt,
And where my treasures lie, from my own stores
I will enrich and send him joyful home.

515

Ulysses, therefore, that he might obtain
Those princely gifts, went thither. Him arrived,
With right-hand gratulation and with words
Of welcome kind, Autolycus received,
Nor less his offspring; but the mother most
Of his own mother clung around his neck,
Amphithea; she with many a fervent kiss
His forehead press'd, and his bright-beaming eyes.
Then bade Autolycus his noble sons
Set forth a banquet. They, at his command,
Led in a fatted ox of the fifth year,
Which slaying first, they spread him carved abroad,
Then scored his flesh, transfix'd it with the spits,
And roasting all with culinary skill
Exact, gave each a portion. Thus they sat
Feasting all day, and till the sun declined;
But when the sun declined, and darkness fell,
Each sought his couch, and took the gift of sleep.
Then, soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
Aurora look'd abroad, forth went the hounds,
And with the hounds Ulysses, and the youths,
Sons of Autolycus, to chase the boar.
Arrived at the Parnassian mount, they climb'd
His bushy sides, and to his airy heights
Ere long attain'd. It was the pleasant hour
When from the gently swelling flood profound
The sun, emerging, first smote on the fields.
The hunters reach'd the valley; foremost ran,
Questing, the hounds; behind them, swift, the sons
Came of Autolycus, with whom advanced
The illustrious Prince Ulysses, pressing close
The hounds, and brandishing his massy spear.
There, hid in thickest shades, lay an huge boar.
That covert neither rough winds blowing moist
Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun
Smite through it, or fast falling showers pervade,
So thick it was, and underneath, the ground

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With litter of dry foliage strew'd profuse.
Hunters and dogs approaching him, his ear
The sound of feet perceived ; upridging high 555
His bristly back and glaring fire, he sprang
Forth from the shrubs, and in defiance stood
Near and right opposite. Ulysses, first,
Rush'd on him, elevating his long spear
Ardent to wound him ; but, preventing quick 560
His foe, the boar gash'd him above the knee.
Much flesh, assailing him oblique, he tore
With his rude tusk, but to the Hero's bone
Pierced not ; Ulysses *his* right shoulder reach'd ;
And with a deadly thrust impell'd the point 565
Of his bright spear through him and far beyond.
Loud yell'd the boar, sank in the dust, and died.
Around Ulysses, then, the busy sons
Throng'd of Autolycus ; expert they braced
The wound of the illustrious hunter bold, 570
With incantation staunch'd the sable blood,
And sought in haste their father's house again,
Whence, heal'd and gratified with splendid gifts,
They sent him soon rejoicing to his home,
Themselves rejoicing also. Glad their son 575
His parents saw again, and of the scar
Enquired, where given, and how ? He told them all,
How to Parnassus with his friends he went,
Sons of Autolycus, to hunt, and how
A boar had gash'd him with his ivory tusk. 580

That scar, while chafing him with open palms,
The matron knew ; she left his foot to fall ;
Down dropp'd his leg into the vase ; the brass
Rang, and, o'ertilted by the sudden shock,
Pour'd forth the water, flooding wide the floor. 585
Her spirit joy at once and sorrow seized ;
Tears fill'd her eyes ; her intercepted voice
Died in her throat ; but to Ulysses' beard
Her hand advancing, thus, at length she spake.

Thou art himself, Ulysses. Oh my son ! 590
Dear to me, and my master as thou art,
I knew thee not till I had touch'd the scar.

She said, and to Penelope her eyes

Directed, all impatient to declare
 Her own Ulysses even then at home. 595
 But she, nor eye nor ear for aught that pass'd
 Had then, her fix'd attention so entire
 Minerva had engaged. Then, darting forth
 His arms, the Hero with his right-hand close
 Compress'd her throat, and nearer to himself, 600
 Drawing her with his left, thus caution'd her.

Why would'st thou ruin me? Thou gavest me milk
 Thyself from thy own breast. See me return'd
 After long sufferings, in the twentieth year,
 To my own land. But since (some God the thought 605
 Suggesting to thee) thou hast learn'd the truth,
 Silence! lest others learn it from thy lips.
 For this I say, nor shall the threat be vain;
 If God vouchsafe to me to overcome
 The haughty suitors, when I shall inflict 610
 Death on the other women of my house,
 Although my nurse, thyself shalt also die.

Him answer'd Euryclea then, discreet.
 My son! oh how could so severe a word
 Escape thy lips? my fortitude of mind 615
 Thou know'st, and even now shalt prove me firm
 As iron, secret as the stubborn rock.
 But hear and mark me well. Should'st thou prevail,
 Assisted by a Power divine, to slay
 The haughty suitors, I will then, myself, 620
 Give thee to know of all the female train
 Who have dishonour'd thee, and who respect.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 My nurse, it were superfluous; spare thy tongue
 That needless task. I can distinguish well 625
 Myself, between them, and shall know them all;
 But hold thy peace. Hush! leave it with the Gods.

So he; then went the ancient matron forth,
 That she might serve him with a second bath,
 For the whole first was spilt. Thus, laved at length, 630
 And smooth'd with oil, Ulysses nearer pull'd
 His seat toward the glowing hearth to enjoy
 More warmth, and drew his tatters o'er the scar.
 Then, prudent, thus Penelope began.

One question, stranger, I shall yet propound,
Though brief, for soon the hour of soft repose,
Grateful to all, and even to the sad
Whom gentle sleep forsakes not, will arrive.
But heaven to me immeasurable woe
Assigns,—whose sole delight is to consume
My days in sighs, while here retired I sit,
Watching my maidens' labours and my own;
But (night return'd, and all to bed retired)
I press mine also, yet with deep regret
And anguish lacerated, even there. 645
As when at spring's first entrance, her sweet song
The azure-crested nightingale renews,
Daughter of Pandarus; within the grove's
Thick foliage perch'd, she pours her echoing voice,
Now deep, now clear, still varying the strain 650
With which she mourns her Itylus, her son
By royal Zethus, whom she, erring, slew,⁴
So also I, by soul-distressing doubts
Toss'd ever, muse if I shall here remain
A faithful guardian of my son's affairs, 655
My husband's bed respecting, and not less
My own fair fame, or whether I shall him
Of all my suitors follow to his home
Who noblest seems, and offers richest dower.
My son while he was infant yet, and own'd 660
An infant's mind, could never give consent
That I should wed and leave him; but, at length,
Since he hath reach'd the stature of a man,
He wishes my departure hence, the waste
Viewing indignant by the suitors made. 665
But I have dream'd. Hear, and expound my dream.
My geese are twenty, which within my walls
I feed with sodden wheat; they serve to amuse
Sometimes my sorrow. From the mountains came
An eagle, huge, hook-beak'd, brake all their necks, 670

⁴ She intended to slay the son of her husband's brother Amphion, incited to it by envy of his wife, who had six children, while herself had only two, but through mistake she slew her own son Itylus, and for her punishment was transformed by Jupiter into a nightingale.

And slew them; scatter'd on the palace-floor
 They lay, and he soar'd swift into the skies.
 Dream only as it was, I wept aloud,
 Till all my maidens, gather'd by my voice,
 Arriving, found me weeping still, and still
 Complaining, that the eagle had at once
 Slain all my geese. But, to the palace-roof
 Stooping again, he sat, and with a voice
 Of human sound, forbad my tears, and said—

675

Courage! O daughter of the far-renown'd
 Icarus! no vain dream thou hast beheld,
 But, in thy sleep, a truth. The slaughter'd geese
 Denote thy suitors. I who have appear'd
 An eagle in thy sight, am yet indeed
 Thy husband, who have now, at last, return'd,
 Death, horrid death designing for them all.

680

685

He said; then waking at the voice, I cast
 An anxious look around, and saw my geese
 Beside their tray, all feeding as before.

Her then Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 O Queen! it is not possible to miss
 Thy dream's plain import, since Ulysses' self
 Hath told thee the event; thy suitors all
 Must perish; not one suitor shall escape.

690

To whom Penelope discreet replied.
 Dreams are inexplicable, O my guest!
 And oft-times mere delusions, that receive
 No just accomplishment. There are two gates⁵
 Through which the fleeting phantoms pass; of horn
 Is one, and one of ivory. Such dreams
 As through the thin-leaf'd ivory portal come,
 Soothe, but perform not, uttering empty sounds;
 But such as through the polish'd horn escape,
 If haply seen by any mortal eye,
 Prove faithful witnesses, and are fulfill'd.
 But through those gates my wondrous dream, I think,

695

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705

⁵ The difference of the two substances may perhaps serve to account for the preference given in this case to the gate of horn; horn being transparent, and as such emblematical of truth; while ivory, from its whiteness, promises light, but is, in fact, opaque. F.

Came not; thrice welcome were it else to me
And to my son. Now mark my words; attend.
This is the hated morn that from the house
Removes me of Ulysses. I shall fix, 710
This day, the rings for trial to them all
Of archership; Ulysses' custom was
To plant twelve spikes⁶, all regular arranged
Like galley-props, and crested with a ring,
Then standing far remote, true in his aim, 715
He with his whizzing shaft would thrud them all.
This is the contest in which now I mean
To prove the suitors; him, who with most ease
Shall bend the bow, and shoot through all the rings,
I follow, this dear mansion of my youth 720
Leaving, so fair, so fill'd with every good,
Though still to love it even in my dreams.
Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
Consort revered of Laertiades!
Postpone not this contention, but appoint 725
Forthwith the trial; for Ulysses here
Will sure arrive, ere they (his polish'd bow
Long tampering) shall prevail to stretch the nerve,
And speed the arrow through the iron rings.
To whom Penelope replied discreet. 730
Would'st thou with thy sweet converse, O my guest!
Here soothe me still, sleep ne'er should influence
These eyes the while; but always to resist
Sleep's power is not for man, to whom the Gods
Each circumstance of his condition here 735
Fix universally. Myself will seek
My own apartment at the palace-top,
And there will lay me down on my sad couch,
For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went 740
To that bad city, never to be named.

⁶ The translation here is somewhat pleonastic for the sake of perspicuity; the original is clear in itself, but not to us who have no such practice. Twelve stakes were fixed in the earth, each having a ring at the top; the order in which they stood was so exact, that an arrow sent with an even hand through the first ring, would pass them all.

There will I sleep ; but sleep thou here below,
Either, thyself, preparing on the ground
Thy couch, or on a couch by these prepared.

So saying, she to her splendid chamber thence
Retired, not sole, but by her female train
Attended ; there arrived, she wept her spouse,
Her loved Ulysses, till Minerva dropp'd
The balm of slumber on her weary lids.

BOOK XX.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, doubting whether he shall destroy or not the women servants who commit lewdness with the suitors, resolves at length to spare them for the present. He asks an omen from Jupiter, and that he would grant him also to hear some propitious words from the lips of one in the family. His petitions are both answered. Preparation is made for the feast. Whilst the suitors sit at table, Pallas smites them with a horrid frenzy. Theoclymenus, observing the strange effects of it, prophesies their destruction, and they deride his prophecy.

BUT in the vestibule the Hero lay
 On a bull's hide undress'd, o'er which he spread
 The fleece of many a sheep slain by the Greeks,
 And, cover'd by the household's governess
 With a wide cloak, composed himself to rest. 5
 Yet slept he not, but meditating lay
 Woe to his enemies. Meantime the train
 Of women wonted to the suitors' arms,
 Issuing all mirth and laughter, in his soul
 A tempest raised of doubts, whether at once 10
 To slay, or to permit them yet to give
 Their lusty paramours one last embrace.
 As growls the mastiff standing on the start
 For battle, if a stranger's foot approach
 Her cubs new-whelp'd—so growl'd Ulysses' heart, 15
 While wonder fill'd him at their impious deeds.
 But, smiting on his breast, thus he reprov'd
 The mutinous inhabitant within.
 Heart! bear it. Worse than this thou didst endure
 When, uncontrolable by force of man, 20
 The Cyclops thy illustrious friends devour'd.
 Thy patience then fail'd not, till prudence found
 Deliverance for thee on the brink of fate.
 So disciplined the Hero his own heart,

Which, tractable, endured the rigorous curb,
 And patient ; yet he turn'd from side to side.
 As when some hungry swain turns oft a maw
 Unctuous and savoury on the burning coals,
 Quick expediting his desired repast,
 So he from side to side roll'd, pondering deep
 How likeliest with success he might assail
 Those shameless suitors ; one to many opposed.
 Then, sudden from the skies descending, came
 Minerva in a female form ; her stand
 Above his head she took, and thus she spake. 25 30 35

Why sleep'st thou not; unhappiest of mankind ?
 Thou art at home ; here dwells thy wife, and here
 Thy son ; a son, whom all might wish their own.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 O Goddess ! true is all that thou hast said,
 But, not without anxiety, I muse
 How, single as I am, I shall assail
 Those shameless suitors who frequent my courts
 Daily, and always their whole multitude.
 This weightier theme I meditate beside ;
 Should I, with Jove's concurrence and with thine,
 Prevail to slay them, how shall I escape,
 Myself, at last ?¹ oh Goddess, weigh it well. 40 45

Him answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
 Oh faithless man ! a man will in his friend
 Confide, though mortal, and in valour less
 And wisdom than himself ; but I who keep
 Thee in all difficulties, am divine. 50

I tell thee plainly. Were we hemm'd around
 By fifty troops of shouting warriors bent
 To slay thee, thou should'st yet securely drive
 The flocks away and cattle of them all.
 But yield to sleep's soft influence ; for to lie
 All night thus watchful, is, itself, distress.
 Fear not. Deliverance waits, not far remote. 55 60

So saying, she o'er Ulysses' eyes diffused
 Soft slumbers, and when sleep, that soothes the mind
 And nerves the limbs afresh, had seized him once,
 To the Olympian summit swift return'd.

¹ That is, how shall I escape the vengeance of their kindred ?

But his chaste spouse awoke ; she weeping sat 65
 On her soft couch, and noblest of her sex,
 Satiated at length with tears, her prayer address'd
 First to Diana of the Powers above.

Diana, awful progeny of Jove!

I would that with a shaft this moment sped 70
 Into my bosom, thou would'st here conclude

My mournful life ! or, oh that, as it flies,
 Snatching me through the pathless air, a storm
 Would whelm me deep in Ocean's restless tide !

So, when the Gods their parents had destroy'd, 75
 Storms suddenly the beauteous daughters¹ snatch'd
 Of Pandarus away ; them left forlorn

Venus with curds, with honey and with wine
 Fed duly ; Juno gave them to surpass 80
 All women in the charms of face and mind,

With graceful stature eminent the chaste
 Diana bless'd them, and in works of art
 Illustrious, Pallas taught them to excel.

But when the foam-sprung Goddess to the skies
 A suitress went on their behalf, to obtain 85
 Blest nuptials for them from the Thunderer Jove,

(For Jove the happiness, himself, appoints,
 And the unhappiness of all below,) 90

Meantime, the Harpies ravishing away
 Those virgins, gave them to the Furies three,
 That they might serve them. O that me the Gods
 Inhabiting Olympus so would hide

From human eyes for ever, or bright-hair'd
 Diana pierce me with a shaft, that while
 Ulysses yet engages all my thoughts, 95

My days concluded, I might 'scape the pain
 Of gratifying some inferior Chief !
 This is supportable, when (all the day

To sorrow given) the mourner sleeps at night ;
 For sleep, when it hath once the eyelids veil'd, 100
 All reminiscence blots of all alike,

Both good and ill ; but me the Gods afflict
 Not seldom even in dreams, and at my side,
 This night again, one lay resembling him ;

² Aëdon, Cleothera, Merope.

Such as my own Ulysses when he join'd 105
 Achaia's warriors ; my exulting heart
 No airy dream believed it, but a truth.

While thus she spake, in orient gold enthroned
 Came forth the morn ; Ulysses, as she wept,
 Heard plain her lamentation ; him that sound 110
 Alarm'd ; he thought her present, and himself
 Known to her. Gathering hastily the cloak
 His covering, and the fleeces, them he placed
 Together on a throne within the hall,
 But bore the bull's-hide forth into the air. 115
 Then, lifting high his hands to Jove, he pray'd.

Eternal Sire ! if over moist and dry
 Ye have with good will sped me to my home
 After much suffering, grant me from the lips
 Of some domestic now awake, to hear 120
 Words of propitious omen, and thyself
 Vouchsafe me still some other sign abroad.

Such prayer he made, and Jove omniscient heard.
 Sudden he thunder'd from the radiant heights
 Olympian ; glad, Ulysses heard the sound. 125
 A woman, next, a labourer at the mill
 Hard by, where all the palace-mills were wrought,
 Gave him the omen of propitious sound.
 Twelve maidens, day by day, toil'd at the mills,
 Meal grinding, some of barley, some of wheat, 130
 Marrow of man.³ The rest (their portion ground)
 All slept ; she only from her task as yet
 Ceased not, for she was feeblest of them all ;
 She rested on her mill, and thus pronounced
 The happy omen by her Lord desired. 135

Jove, Father, Governor of heaven and earth !
 Loud thou hast thunder'd from the starry skies
 By no cloud veil'd ; a sign propitious, given
 To whom I know not ; but oh grant the prayer
 Of a poor bond-woman ! appoint their feast 140
 This day, the last that in Ulysses' house
 The suitors shall enjoy, for whom I drudge,
 With aching heart and trembling knees their meal
 Grinding continual. Feast they here no more !

³ *μελον ανδρων.*

She ended, and the listening Chief received 145
With equal joy both signs ; for well he hoped
That he should punish soon those guilty men.
And now the other maidens in the hall
Assembling, kindled on the hearth again
The unwearied blaze ; then, godlike from his couch 150
Arose Telemachus, and fresh-attired,
Athwart his shoulders his bright faulchion slung,
Bound his fair sandals to his feet, and took
His sturdy spear pointed with glittering brass ;
Advancing to the portal, there he stood, 155
And Euryclea thus, his nurse, bespake.

Nurse ! have ye with respectful notice served
Our guest ? or hath he found a sordid couch
Even where he might ? for, prudent though she be,
My mother, inattentive oft, the worse 160
Treats kindly, and the better sends away.

Whom Euryclea answer'd thus discreet.
Blame not, my son ! who merits not thy blame.
The guest sat drinking till he would no more,
And ate, till, question'd, he replied—Enough. 165
But when the hour of sleep call'd him to rest,
She gave commandment to her female train
To spread his couch. Yet he, like one forlorn,
And through despair, indifferent to himself,
Both bed and rugs refused, and in the porch 170
On skins of sheep and on an undress'd hide
Reposed, where we threw covering over him.

She ceased, and grasping his bright-headed spear,
Forth went the Prince attended, as he went,
By his fleet hounds ; to the assembled Greeks 175
In council with majestic gait he moved,
And Euryclea, daughter wise of Ops,
Pisenor's son, call'd to the serving-maids.

Haste ye ! be diligent ! sweep the palace-floor
And sprinkle it ; then give the sumptuous seats 180
Their purple coverings. Let others cleanse
With sponges all the tables, wash and rince
The beakers well, and goblets rich emboss'd ;
Run others to the fountain, and bring thence
Water with speed. The suitors will not long 185

Be absent, but will early come to-day,
For this day is a public festival.⁴

So she ; whom all, obedient, heard ; forth went
Together, twenty to the crystal fount,
While in their several provinces the rest 190
Bestirr'd them brisk at home. Then enter'd all
The suitors, and began cleaving the wood.
Meantime, the women from the fountain came,
Whom soon the swine-herd follow'd, driving three
His fattest brawns ; them in the spacious court 195
He feeding left, and to Ulysses' side
Approaching, courteously bespake the Chief.

Guest ! look the Grecians on thee with respect
At length, or still disdainful as before ?

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd. 200
Yes—and I would that vengeance from the Gods
Might pay their insolence, who in a house
Not theirs, dominion exercise, and plan
Unseemly projects, shameless as they are !

Thus they conferr'd ; and now Melanthius came, 205
The goat-herd, driving, with the aid of two
His fellow-swains, the fattest of his goats
To feast the suitors. In the sounding porch
The goats he tied, then, drawing near, in terms
Reproachful thus assail'd Ulysses' ear. 210

How, stranger ! perseverest thou, begging, still
To vex the suitors ? wilt thou not depart ?
Scarce shall we settle this dispute, I judge,
Till we have tasted each the other's fist ;
Thou art unreasonable thus to beg 215
Here always ;—have the Greeks no feasts beside ?

He spake, to whom Ulysses answer none
Return'd, but shook his brows, and silent framed
Terrible purposes. Then, third, approach'd 220
Chief o'er the herds, Philoetius ; fatted goats
He for the suitors brought, with which he drove
An heifer ; (ferry-men had pass'd them o'er,
Carriers of all who on their coast arrive ;)
He tied them in the sounding porch, then stood
Beside the swine-herd, to whom thus he said. 225

⁴ The new moon.

Who is this guest Eumæus, here arrived
 So lately? from what nation hath he come?
 What parentage and country boasts the man?
 I pity him, whose figure seems to speak
 Royalty in him. Heaven will surely plunge
 The race of common wanderers deep in woe,
 If thus it destine even Kings to mourn. 230

He ceased; and, with his right hand, drawing nigh,
 Welcomed Ulysses, whom he thus bespake.

Hail venerable guest! and be thy lot
 Prosperous at least hereafter, who art held
 At present, in the bonds of numerous ills.
 Thou, Jupiter, of all the Gods, art most
 Severe, and sparest not to inflict distress
 Even on creatures from thyself derived.⁵ 240

I had no sooner mark'd thee, than my eyes
 Swam, and the sweat gush'd from me at the thought
 Of dear Ulysses; for if yet he live
 And see the sun, such tatters, I suppose,
 He wears, a wanderer among human-kind. 245

But if already with the dead he dwell
 In Pluto's drear abode, oh then, alas
 For kind Ulysses! who consign'd to me,
 While yet a boy, his Cephaleian herds,
 And they have now increased to such a store
 Innumerable of broad-fronted beeves, 250
 As only care like mine could have produced.

These, by command of others, I transport
 For their regale, who neither heed his son,
 Nor tremble at the anger of the Gods, 255
 But long have wish'd ardently to divide
 And share the substance of our absent Lord.

Me therefore this thought occupies, and haunts
 My mind not seldom; while the heir survives
 It were no small offence to drive his herds
 Afar, and migrate to a foreign land; 260

Yet here to dwell, suffering oppressive wrongs
 While I attend another's beeves, appears
 Still less supportable; and I had fled,
 And I had served some other mighty Chief 265

⁵ He is often called—πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

Long since, (for patience fails me to endure
My present lot,) but that I cherish still
Some hope of my ill-fated Lord's return,
To rid his palace of these lawless guests.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

270

Herdsmen ! since neither void of sense thou seem'st,
Nor yet dishonest, but myself am sure
That thou art owner of a mind discreet,
Hear therefore, for I swear ! bold I attest
Jove and this hospitable board, and these
The Lares⁶ of the noble Chief, whose hearth
Protects me now, that ere thy going hence,
Ulysses surely shall have reach'd his home,
And thou shalt see him, if thou wilt, thyself,
Slaying the suitors who now lord it here.

275

280

Him answer'd then the keeper of his beeves.

Oh stranger ! would but the Saturnian King
Perform that word, thou should'st be taught (thyself
Eye-witness of it) what an arm is mine.

Eumæus also every power of heaven
Entreated, that Ulysses might possess
His home again. Thus mutual they conferr'd.

285

Meantime, in conference close the suitors plann'd
Death for Telemachus ; but while they sat
Consulting, on their left the bird of Jove
An eagle soar'd, grasping a timorous dove.
Then thus Amphinomus the rest bespake.

290

Oh friends ! our consultation how to slay
Telemachus, will never smoothly run
To its effect ; but let us to the feast.

295

So spake Amphinomus, whose counsel pleased.
Then, all into the royal house repair'd,
And on the thrones and couches throwing off
Their mantles, slew the fatted goats, the brawns,
The sheep full-sized, and heifer of the herd.
The roasted entrails first they shared, then fill'd
The beakers, and the swine-herd placed the cups ;
Philœtius, chief intendant of the beeves,
Served all with baskets elegant of bread,
While all their cups Melanthius charged with wine,

300

305

⁶ Household Gods who presided over the hearth.

And they assail'd at once the ready feast.
Meantime Telemachus, with forecast shrewd,
Fast by the marble threshold, but within
The spacious hall his father placed, to whom
A sordid seat he gave and scanty board.
A portion of the entrails, next, he set
Before him, fill'd a golden goblet high,
And thus, in presence of them all, began.

310

There seated now, drink as the suitors drink.
I will, myself, their biting taunts forbid,
And violence. This edifice is mine,
Not public property ; my father first
Possess'd it, and my right from him descends.
Suitors ! control your tongues, nor with your hands
Offend, lest contest fierce and war ensue.

315

320

He ceased ; they gnawing, sat, their lips aghast
With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
Such boldness used. Then spake Eupithes' son,
Antinoüs, and the assembly thus address'd.

Let pass, ye Greeks ! the language of the Prince,
Harsh as it is, and big with threats to us.
Had Jove permitted, his orations here,
Although thus eloquent, ere now had ceased.

325

So spake Antinoüs, whom Ulysses' son
Heard unconcern'd. And now the heralds came
In solemn pomp, conducting through the streets
A sacred hecatomb, when in the grove
Umbrageous of Apollo, King shaft-arm'd,
The assembled Grecians met. The savoury roast
Finish'd, and from the spits withdrawn, each shared
His portion of the noble feast, and such
As they enjoy'd themselves the attendants placed
Before Ulysses, for the Hero's son
Himself, Telemachus, had so enjoin'd.
But Pallas (that they might exasperate more
Ulysses) suffer'd not the suitor Chiefs
To banquet, guiltless of heart-piercing scoffs
Malign. There was a certain suitor named
Ctesippus, born in Samos ; base of mind
Was he and profligate, but in the wealth
Confiding of his father, woo'd the wife

330

335

340

345

Of long-exiled Ulysses. From his seat
The haughty suitors thus that man address'd.

Ye noble suitors, I would speak ; attend !
The guest is served ; he hath already shared 350
Equal with us ; nor less the laws demand
Of hospitality ; for neither just
It were nor decent, that a guest, received
Here by Telemachus, should be denied
His portion of the feast. Come then—myself 355
Will give to him that he may also give
To her who laved him in the bath, or else
To whatsoever menial here he will.

So saying, he from a basket near at hand
Heaved an ox-foot, and with a vigorous arm 360
Hurl'd it. Ulysses gently bow'd his head,
Shunning the blow, but gratified his just
Resentment with a broad sardonic smile⁷
Of dread significance. He smote the wall.
Then thus Telemachus rebuked the deed. 365

Ctesippus, thou art fortunate ; the bone
Struck not the stranger, for he shunn'd the blow ;
Else, I had surely thrust my glittering lance
Right through thee ; then, no hymeneal rites
Of thine should have employ'd thy father here, 370
But thy funereal. No man therefore treat
Me with indignity within these walls,
For though of late a child, I can discern
Now, and distinguish between good and ill.
Suffice it that we patiently endure 375
To be spectators daily of our sheep
Slaughter'd, our bread consumed, our stores of wine
Wasted ; for what can one to all opposed ?
Come then—persist no longer in offence
And hostile hate of me ; or if ye wish 380
To slay me, pause not. It were better far
To die, and I had rather much be slain,
Than thus to witness your atrocious deeds
Day after day ; to see our guests abused,
With blows insulted, and the women dragg'd 385
With a licentious violence obscene

⁷ A smile of displeasure.

From side to side of all this fair abode.

He said, and all sat silent, till at length
Thus Agelaüs spake, Diastor's son.

My friends ! let none with contradiction thwart 390

And rude reply, words rational and just ;

Assault no more the stranger, nor of all

The servants of renown'd Ulysses here

Harm any. My advice, both to the Queen

And to Telemachus, shall gentle be, 395

May it but please them. While the hope survived

Within your bosoms of the safe return

Of wise Ulysses to his native isle,

So long good reason was that she should use

Delay, and hold our wooing in suspense ; 400

For had Ulysses come, that course had proved

Wisest and best ; but that he comes no more

Appears now manifest. Thou, therefore, Prince !

Seeking thy mother, counsel her to wed

The noblest, and who offers richest dower, 405

That thou, for thy peculiar, may'st enjoy

Thy own inheritance in peace and ease,

And she, departing, find another home.

To whom Telemachus discreet, replied.

I swear by Jove, and by my father's woes, 410

Who either hath deceased far from his home,

Or lives a wanderer, that I interpose

No hindrance to her nuptials. Let her wed

Who offers most, and even whom she will.

But to dismiss her rudely were a deed 415

Unfilial.—That I dare not ;—God forbid !

So spake Telemachus. Then Pallas struck

The suitors with delirium ; wide they stretch'd

Their jaws with unspontaneous laughter loud ;

Their meat dripp'd blood ; tears fill'd their eyes, and dire 420

Presages of approaching woe, their hearts.

Then thus the prophet Theoclymenus.^s

Ah miserable men ! what curse is this

That takes you now ? night wraps itself around

Your faces, bodies, limbs ; the palace shakes 425

^s Who had sought refuge in the ship of Telemachus when he left Sparta, and came with him to Ithaca.

With peals of groans—and oh, what floods ye weep!
I see the walls and arches dappled thick
With gore; the vestibule is throng'd, the court
On all sides throng'd with apparitions grim
Of slaughter'd men sinking into the gloom 430
Of Erebus; the sun is blotted out
From heaven, and midnight whelms you premature.

He said, they hearing laugh'd; and thus the son
Of Polybus, Eurymachus replied.

This wanderer from a distant shore hath left 435
His wits behind. Ho! there! conduct him hence
Into the forum; since he dreams it night
Already, teach him there that it is day.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus.
I have no need, Eurymachus, of guides 440
To lead me hence, for I have eyes and ears,
The use of both my feet, and of a mind
In no respect irrational or wild.
These shall conduct me forth, for well I know
That evil threatens you, such too as none 445
Shall 'scape of all the suitors, whose delight
Is to insult the unoffending guest
Received beneath this hospitable roof.

He said, and, issuing from the palace, sought
Piræus' house, who gladly welcomed him. 450
Then all the suitors on each other cast
A look significant, and, to provoke
Telemachus the more, fleer'd at his guests.
Of whom a youth thus, insolent, began.

No living wight, Telemachus, had e'er 455
Guests such as thine. Witness, we know not who,
This hungry vagabond, whose means of life
Are none, and who hath neither skill nor force
To earn them, a mere burthen on the ground.
Witness the other also, who upstarts 460
A prophet suddenly. Take my advice;
I counsel wisely; send them both on board
Some gallant bark to Sicily for sale;
Thus shall they somewhat profit thee at last.

So spake the suitors, whom Telemachus 465
Heard unconcern'd, and silent, look'd and look'd

Toward his father, watching still the time
When he should punish that licentious throng.
Meantime, Icarius' daughter, who had placed
Her splendid seat opposite, heard distinct
Their taunting speeches. They, with noisy mirth,
Feasted deliciously, for they had slain
Many a fat victim ; but a sadder feast
Than soon the Goddess and the warrior Chief
Should furnish for them, none shall ever share,
Of which their crimes had furnish'd first the cause.

470

475

BOOK XXI.

A R G U M E N T.

Penelope proposes to the suitors a contest with the bow, herself the prize. They prove unable to bend the bow; when Ulysses, having with some difficulty possessed himself of it, manages it with the utmost ease, and dispatches his arrow through twelve rings erected for the trial.

MINERVA now, Goddess cœrulean-eyed,
 Prompted Icarius' daughter, the discreet
 Penelope, with bow and rings to prove
 Her suitors in Ulysses' courts, a game
 Terrible in conclusion to them all. 5
 First, taking in her hand the brazen key
 Well-forged, and fitted with an ivory grasp,
 Attended by the women of her train
 She sought her inmost chamber, the recess
 In which she kept the treasures of her Lord, 10
 His brass, his gold, and steel elaborate.
 Here lay his stubborn bow, and quiver fill'd
 With numerous shafts, a fatal store. That bow
 He had received and quiver from the hand
 Of godlike Iphitus Eurytides, 15
 Whom, in Messenia,¹ in the house he met
 Of brave Orsilochnus. Ulysses came
 Demanding payment of arrearage due
 From all that land; for a Messenian fleet
 Had borne from Ithaca three hundred sheep, 20
 With all their shepherds; for which cause, ere yet
 Adult, he voyaged to that distant shore,
 Deputed by his sire, and by the Chiefs
 Of Ithaca, to make the just demand.
 But Iphitus had thither come to seek 25
 Twelve mares and twelve mule colts which he had lost,

¹ A province of Laconia.

A search that cost him soon a bloody death.
For, coming to the house of Hercules,
The valiant task-performing son of Jove,
He perish'd there, slain by his cruel host, 30
Who, heedless of heaven's wrath, and of the rights
Of his own board, first fed, then slaughter'd him ;
For in *his* house the mares and colts were hidden.
He, therefore, occupied in that concern,
Meeting Ulysses there, gave him the bow 35
Which, erst, huge Eurytus had borne, and which
Himself had from his dying sire received.
Ulysses, in return, on him bestow'd
A spear and sword, pledges of future love
And hospitality ; but never more 40
They met each other at the friendly board,
For, ere that hour arrived, the son of Jove
Slew his own guest, the godlike Iphitus.
Thus came the bow into Ulysses' hands,
Which never in his gallant barks he bore 45
To battle with him, (though he used it oft
In times of peace,) but left it safely stored
At home, a dear memorial of his friend.
Soon as, divinest of her sex, arrived
At that same chamber, with her foot she press'd 50
The oaken threshold bright, on which the hand
Of no mean architect had stretch'd the line,
Who had erected also on each side
The posts on which the splendid portal hung,
She loosed the ring and brace, then introduced 55
The key, and aiming at them from without,²
Struck back the bolts. The portals, at that stroke,
Sent forth a tone deep as the pastured bull's,
And flew wide open. She ascending next
The elevated floor on which the chests 60
That held her own fragrant apparel stood,
With lifted hand aloft took down the bow
In its embroider'd bow-case safe enclosed.
Then sitting there, she laid it on her knees,

² The reader will of course observe, that the whole of this process implies a sort of mechanism very different from that with which we are acquainted.—The translation, I believe, is exact.

- Weeping aloud, and drew it from the case. 65
Thus weeping over it long time she sat,
Till satiate, at the last, with grief and tears,
Descending by the palace steps she sought
Again the haughty suitors, with the bow
Elastic, and the quiver in her hand 70
Replete with pointed shafts, a deadly store.
Her maidens, as she went, bore after her
A coffer fill'd with prizes by her Lord,
Much brass and steel ; and when at length she came,
Loveliest of women, where the suitors sat, 75
Between the pillars of the stately dome
Pausing, before her beauteous face she held
Her lucid veil, and by two matrons chaste
Supported, the assembly thus address'd.
- Ye noble suitors, hear, who rudely haunt 80
This palace of a Chief long absent hence,
Whose substance ye have now long time consumed,
Nor palliative have yet contrived, or could,
Save your ambition to make me a bride,—
Attend this game to which I call you forth. 85
Now, suitors ! prove yourselves with this huge bow
Of wide-renown'd Ulysses ; he who draws
Easiest the bow, and who his arrow sends
Through twice six rings, he takes me to his home,
And I must leave this mansion of my youth 90
Plenteous, magnificent, which doubtless oft
I shall remember even in my dreams.
- So saying, she bade Eumæus lay the bow
Before them, and the twice six rings of steel.
He wept, received them, and obey'd ; nor wept 95
The herdsman less, seeing the bow which erst
His Lord had occupied ; when at their tears
Indignant, thus, Antinoüs began.
- Ye rural drones, whose purblind eyes see not
Beyond the present hour, egregious fools ! 100
Why weeping trouble ye the Queen, too much
Before afflicted for her husband lost ?
Either partake the banquet silently,
Or else go weep abroad, leaving the bow,
That stubborn test, to us ; for none, I judge, 105

None here shall bend this polish'd bow with ease,
Since in this whole assembly I discern
None like Ulysses, whom myself have seen
And recollect, though I was then a boy.

He said, but in his heart meantime the hope 110
Cherish'd, that he should bend, himself, the bow,
And pass the rings ; yet was he destined first
Of all that company to taste the steel
Of brave Ulysses' shaft, whom in that house
He had so oft dishonour'd, and had urged 115
So oft all others to the like offence.

Amidst them then the sacred might arose
Of young Telemachus, who thus began.

Saturnian Jove questionless hath deprived 120
Me of all reason. My own mother, famed
For wisdom as she is, makes known to all
Her purpose to abandon this abode
And follow a new mate, while heedless I
Trifle and laugh as I were still a child.

But come, ye suitors ! since the prize is such, 125
A woman, like to whom none can be found
This day in all Achaia ; on the shores
Of sacred Pylus ; in the cities proud
Of Argos or Mycenæ ; or even here
In Ithaca ; or yet within the walls 130
Of black Epirus ; and since this yourselves

Know also, wherefore should I speak her praise ?
Come then, delay not, waste not time in vain
Excuses, turn not from the proof, but bend
The bow, that thus the issue may be known. 135

I also will, myself, that task essay ;
And should I bend the bow, and pass the rings,
Then shall not my illustrious mother leave
Her son forlorn, forsaking this abode
To follow a new spouse, while I remain 140
Disconsolate, although of age to bear,
Successful as my sire, the prize away.

So saying, he started from his seat, cast off
His purple cloak, and laid his sword aside,
Then fix'd, himself, the rings, furrowing the earth 145
By line, and opening one long trench for all,

And stamping close the glebe. Amazement seized
 All present, seeing with how prompt a skill
 He executed, though untaught, his task.
 Then hasting to the portal, there he stood. 150
 Thrice, struggling, he essay'd to bend the bow,
 And thrice desisted, hoping still to draw
 The bow-string home, and shoot through all the rings.³
 And now the fourth time striving with full force
 He had prevail'd to string it, but his sire 155
 Forbad his eager efforts by a sign.
 Then thus the royal youth to all around.

Gods! either I shall prove of little force
 Hereafter, and for manly feats unapt,
 Or I am yet too young, and have not strength 160
 To quell the aggressor's contumely. But come—
 (For ye have strength surpassing mine,) try ye
 The bow, and bring this contest to an end.

He ceased, and set the bow down on the floor,
 Reclining it against the pannels smooth 165
 That lined the wall; the arrow next he placed,
 Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn,
 And to the seat, whence he had risen, return'd.
 Then thus Eupithes' son, Antinoüs spake.

My friends! come forth successive from the right,⁴ 170
 Where he who ministers the cup begins.

So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
 Then, first, Leiodes, Cēnop's son, arose.
 He was their soothsayer, and ever sat
 Beside the beaker, inmost of them all. 175
 To him alone of all, licentious deeds
 Were odious, and with indignation fired,
 He witness'd the excesses of the rest.
 He then took foremost up the shaft and bow,
 And, station'd at the portal, strove to bend 180
 But bent it not, fatiguing, first, his hands
 Delicate and uncustom'd to the toil.

³ This first attempt of Telemachus and the suitors was not an attempt to shoot, but to lodge the bow-string on the opposite horn, the bow having been released at one end, and slackened while it was laid by.

⁴ Antinoüs prescribes to them this manner of rising to the trial for the good omen's sake, the left hand being held unpropitious.

He ceased, and the assembly thus bespake.

My friends, I speed not; let another try;

For many Princes shall this bow of life 183

Bereave, since death more eligible seems,

Far more, than loss of her, for whom we meet

Continual here, expecting still the prize.

Some suitor haply at this moment hopes

That he shall wed whom long he hath desired, 190

Ulysses' wife, Penelope; let him

Essay the bow, and trial made, address.

His spousal offers to some other fair

Among the long-stoled Princesses of Greece,

This Princess leaving his, whose proffer'd gifts 195

Shall please her most, and whom the Fates ordain.

He said, and set the bow down on the floor,

Reclining it against the pannels smooth

That lined the wall; the arrow, next, he placed,

Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn, 200

And to the seat whence he had risen return'd.

Then him Antinoüs, angry, thus reproved.

What word, Leiodes, grating to our ears

Hath 'scaped thy lips? I hear it with disdain.

Shall this bow fatal prove to many a Prince, 205

Because thou hast thyself too feeble proved

To bend it? no. Thou wast not born to bend

The unpliant bow, or to direct the shaft,

But here are nobler who shall soon prevail.

He said, and to Melanthius gave command, 210

The goat-herd. Hence, Melanthius, kindle fire;

Beside it place, with fleeces spread, a form

Of length commodious; from within procure

A large round cake of suet next, with which

When we have chafed and suppled the tough bow 215

Before the fire, we will again essay

To bend it, and decide the doubtful strife.

He ended, and Melanthius, kindling fire,

Beside it placed, with fleeces spread, a form

Of length commodious; next he brought a cake 220

Ample and round of suet from within,

With which they chafed the bow, then tried again

To bend, but bent it not; superior strength

To theirs that task required. Yet two, the rest
 In force surpassing, made no trial yet, 225
 Antinous, and Eurymachus the brave.

Then went the herdsman and the swine-herd forth
 Together; after whom, the glorious Chief
 Himself the house left also, and when all
 Without the court had met, with gentle speech 230
 Ulysses then the faithful pair address'd.

Herdsmen! and thou, Eumæus! shall I keep
 A certain secret close, or shall I speak
 Outright? my spirit prompts me, and I will.
 What welcome should Ulysses at your hands 235
 Receive, arriving suddenly at home,
 Some God his guide? would ye the suitors aid,
 Or would ye aid Ulysses? answer true.

Then thus the chief intendant of his herds.
 Would Jove but grant me my desire, to see 240
 Once more the Hero, and would some kind Power
 Restore him, I would show thee soon an arm
 Strenuous to serve him, and a dauntless heart.

Eumæus also fervently implored
 The Gods in prayer, that they would render back 245
 Ulysses to his home. He then, convinced
 Of their unfeigning honesty, began.

Behold him! I am he myself, arrived
 After long sufferings in the twentieth year!
 I know how welcome to yourselves alone 250
 Of all my train I come, for I have heard
 None others praying for my safe return.

I therefore tell you truth; should heaven subdue
 The suitors under me, ye shall receive
 Each at my hands a bride, with lands and house 255
 Near to my own, and ye shall be thenceforth
 Dear friends and brothers of the Prince my son.
 Lo! also this indisputable proof

That ye may know and trust me. View it here.
 It is the scar which in Parnassus erst 260
 (Where with the sons I hunted of renown'd
 Autolycus) I from a boar received.

So saying, he stripp'd his tatters, and unveil'd
 The whole broad scar; then soon as they had seen

And surely recognized the mark, each cast 265
 His arms around Ulysses, wept, embraced,
 And press'd him to his bosom, kissing oft
 His brows and shoulders, who as oft their hands
 And foreheads kiss'd, nor had the setting sun
 Beheld them satisfied, but that himself 270
 Ulysses thus admonished them, and said.

Cease now from tears, lest any, coming forth,
 Mark and report them to our foes within.
 Now to the hall again, but one by one,
 Not all at once, I foremost, then yourselves, 275
 And this shall be the sign. Full well I know
 That all unanimous, they will oppose
 Delivery of the bow and shafts to me ;
 But thou, (proceeding with it to my seat)
 Eumæus, noble friend ! shalt give the bow 280
 Into my grasp ; then bid the women close
 The massy doors, and should they hear a groan
 Or other noise made by the Princes shut
 Within the hall, let none set step abroad,
 But all work silent. Be the palace-door 285
 Thy charge, my good Philæteus ! key it fast
 Without a moment's pause, and fix the brace.⁵

He ended, and returning to the hall,
 Resumed his seat ; nor stay'd his servants long
 Without, but follow'd their illustrious Lord. 290
 Eurymachus was busily employ'd
 Turning the bow, and chafing it before
 The sprightly blaze, but after all could find
 No Power to bend it. Disappointment wrung
 A groan from his proud heart, and thus he said. 295

Alas ! not only for myself I grieve,
 But grieve for all. Nor though I mourn the loss
 Of such a bride, mourn I that loss alone,
 (For lovely Grecians may be found no few
 In Ithaca, and in the neighbour isles,) 300
 But should we so inferior prove at last
 To brave Ulysses, that no force of ours
 Can bend his bow, we are for ever shamed.

⁵ The *δεσμός* seems to have been a strap designed to close the only aperture by which the bolt could be displaced, and the door opened.

To whom Antinoüs, thus, Eupithes' son.
 Not so ; (as even thou art well-assured 305
 Thyself, Eurymachus !) but Phœbus claims
 This day his own. Who then, on such a day,
 Would strive to bend it ? Let it rather rest.
 And should we leave the rings where now they stand,
 I trust that none entering Ulysses' house 310
 Will dare displace them. Cup-bearer, attend !
 Serve all with wine, that, first libation made,
 We may religiously lay down the bow.
 Command ye too Melanthius, that he drive
 Hither the fairest goats of all his flocks 315
 At dawn of day, that burning first the thighs
 To the ethereal archer, we may make
 New trial, and decide at length the strife.

So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
 The heralds then pour'd water on their hands, 320
 While youths crown'd high the goblets which they bore
 From right to left, distributing to all.
 When each had made libation, and had drunk
 Till well sufficed, then, artful to effect.
 His shrewd designs, Ulysses thus began. 325

Hear, O ye suitors of the illustrious Queen,
 My bosom's dictates. But I shall entreat
 Chiefly Eurymachus and the godlike youth
 Antinoüs, whose advice is wisely given.

Tamper no longer with the bow, but leave 330
 The matter with the Gods, who shall decide
 The strife to-morrow, favouring whom they will.
 Meantime, grant *me* the polish'd bow, that I
 May trial make among you of my force,
 If I retain it still in like degree 335
 As erst, or whether wandering and defect
 Of nourishment have worn it all away.

He said, whom they with indignation heard
 Extreme, alarm'd lest he should bend the bow,
 And sternly thus Antinoüs replied. 340

Desperate vagabond ! ah wretch deprived
 Of reason utterly ! art not content ?
 Esteem'st it not distinction proud enough
 To feast with us the nobles of the land ?

None robs thee of thy share, thou witnessest 345
 Our whole discourse, which, save thyself alone,
 No needy vagrant is allow'd to hear.
 Thou art besbol'd by wine, as many have been,
 Wide-throated drinkers, unrestrain'd by rule.
 Wine in the mansion of the mighty Chief 350
 Pirithoüs, made the valiant Centaur mad
 Eurytion, at the Lapithæan feast.⁶
 He drank to drunkenness, and being drunk,
 Committed great enormities beneath
 Pirithoüs' roof, and such as fill'd with rage 355
 The Hero-guests, who therefore by his feet
 Dragg'd him right through the vestibule, amerced
 Of nose and ears, and he departed thence
 Provoked to frenzy by that foul disgrace,
 Whence war between the human kind arose 360
 And the bold Centaurs—but he first incurred
 By his ebriety that mulct severe.
 Great evil also if thou bend the bow,
 To thee I prophesy ; for thou shalt find
 Advocate or protector none in all 365
 This people, but we will dispatch thee hence
 Incontinent on board a sable bark
 To Echetus, the scourge of human kind,
 From whom is no escape. Drink then in peace,
 And contest shun with younger men than thou. 370
 Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.
 Antinoüs ! neither seemly were the deed
 Nor just, to maim or harm whatever guest
 Whom here arrived Telemachus receives.
 Canst thou expect, that should he even prove 375
 Stronger than ye, and bend the massy bow,
 He will conduct me hence to his own home,
 And make me his own bride ? No such design
 His heart conceives, or hope ; nor let a dread
 So vain the mind of any overcloud 380
 Who banquets here, since it dishonours me.

⁶ When Pirithoüs, one of the Lapithæ, married Hippodamia, daughter of Adrastus, he invited the Centaurs to the wedding. The Centaurs, intoxicated with wine, attempted to ravish the wives of the Lapithæ, who, in resentment of that insult, slew them.

So she ; to whom Eurymachus replied,
Offspring of Polybus. O matchless Queen !
Icarius' prudent daughter ! none suspects
That thou wilt wed with him ; a mate so mean 385
Should ill become thee ; but we fear the tongues
Of either sex, lest some Achaian say
Hereafter, (one inferior far to us)
Ah ! how unworthy are they to compare
With him whose wife they seek ! to bend his bow 390
Pass'd all their power, yet this poor vagabond,
Arriving from what country none can tell,
Bent it with ease, and shot through all the rings.
So will they speak, and so shall we be shamed.

Then answer thus Penelope return'd. 395
No fair report, Eurymachus, attends
Their names or can, who, riotous as ye,
The house dishonour and consume the wealth
Of such a Chief. Why shame ye thus *yourselves* ?
The guest is of athletic frame, well form'd, 400
And large of limb ! he boasts him also sprung
From noble ancestry. Come then—consent—
Give him the bow, that we may see the proof ;
For thus I say, and thus will I perform ;
Sure as he bends it, and Apollo gives 405
To him that glory, tunic fair and cloak
Shall be his meed from me, a javelin keen
To guard him against men and dogs, a sword
Of double edge, and sandals for his feet,
And I will send him whither most he would. 410

Her answer'd then prudent Telemachus.
Mother—the bow is mine ; and save myself,
No Greek hath right to give it, or refuse.
None who in rock-bound Ithaca possess
Dominion, none in the steed-pastured isles 415
Of Elis, if I chose to make the bow
His own for ever, should that choice control.
But thou into the house repairing, ply
Spindle and loom, thy province, and enjoin
Diligence to thy maidens ; for the bow 420
Is man's concern alone, and shall be mine
Especially, since I am master here.

She heard astonish'd, and the prudent speech
Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
Withdrew ; then mounting with her female train 425
To her superior chamber, there she wept
Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed
With balmy dews of sleep her weary lids.
And now the noble swine-herd bore the bow
Toward Ulysses, but with one voice all 430
The suitors, clamorous, reproved the deed,
Of whom a youth thus insolent exclaim'd.

Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither bear'st the bow,
Delirious wretch ? the hounds that thou hast train'd 435
Shall eat thee at thy solitary home
Ere long, let but Apollo prove, at last,
Propitious to us, and the Powers of heaven.

So they, whom hearing he replaced the bow
Where erst he stood, terrified at the sound
Of such loud menaces ; on the other side 440
Telemachus as loud assail'd his ear.

Friend ! forward with the bow ; or soon repent
That thou obey'dst the many. I will else
With huge stones drive thee, younger as I am,
Back to the field. My strength surpasses thine. 445
I would to heaven that I in force excell'd
As far, and prowess, every suitor here !
So would I soon give rude dismissal hence
To some, who live but to imagine harm.

He ceased, whose words the suitors laughing heard, 450
And for their sake, in part their wrath resign'd
Against Telemachus ; then through the hall
Eumæus bore, and to Ulysses' hand
Consign'd the bow ; next summoning abroad
The ancient nurse, he gave her thus in charge. 455

It is the pleasure of Telemachus,
Sage Euryclea ! that thou key secure
The doors ; and should ye hear perchance a groan
Or other noise made by the Princes shut
Within the hall, let none look curious forth, 460
But each in quietness pursue her work.

So he ; nor flew his words useless away,
But she incontinent shut fast the doors.

Then noiseless sprang Philœtius forth, who closed
The portals also of the palace-court. 465

A ship-rope of Egyptian reed, it chanced
Lay in the vestibule; with that he braced
The doors securely, and re-entering fill'd
Again his seat, but watchful eyed his Lord.
He now assaying with his hand the bow, 470
Made curious trial of it every way,

And turn'd it on all sides, lest haply worms
Had in its master's absence drill'd the horn.
Then thus a suitor to his next remark'd.

He hath an eye methinks exactly skill'd 475
In bows, and steals them; or perhaps at home
Hath such himself, or feels a strong desire
To make them; so inquisitive the rogue,
Adept in mischief, shifts it to and fro!

To whom another insolent replied. 480
I wish him like prosperity in all
His efforts, as attends his efforts made
On this same bow, which he shall never bend.

So they; but when the wary Hero wise
Had made his hand familiar with the bow, 485
Poising it and examining—at once—

As when in harp and song adept, a bard
Unlabouring strains the chord to a new lyre,
The twisted entrails of a sheep below
With fingers nice inserting, and above, 490
With such facility Ulysses bent

His own huge bow, and with his right hand play'd
The nerve which in its quick vibration sang
Clear as the swallow's voice. Keen anguish seized
The suitors, wan grew every cheek, and Jove 495
Gave him his rolling thunder for a sign.

That omen, granted to him by the son
Of wily Saturn, with delight he heard.
He took a shaft that at the table side
Lay ready drawn; but in his quiver's womb 500
The rest yet slept, by those Achæians proud
To be, ere long, experienced. True he lodged
The arrow on the centre of the bow,
And, occupying still his seat, drew home

Nerve and notch'd arrow-head ; with steadfast sight 505
He aim'd and sent it ; right through all the rings
From first to last the steel-charged weapon flew
Issuing beyond, and to his son he spake.

Thou need'st not blush, young Prince, to have received
A guest like me ; neither my arrow swerved, 510
Nor labour'd I long time to draw the bow ;
My strength is unimpair'd, not such as these
In scorn affirm it. But the waning day
Calls us to supper,⁷ after which succeeds
Jocund variety, the song, the harp, 515
With all that heightens and adorns the feast.

He said, and with his brows gave him the sign.
At once the son of the illustrious Chief
Slung his keen faulchion, grasped his spear, and stood
Arm'd bright for battle at his father's side. 520

⁷ This is an instance of the *Σαρδανιον μαλα τοιον* mentioned in Book XX. ; such as, perhaps, could not be easily paralleled. I question if there be a passage, either in ancient or modern tragedy, so truly terrible as this seeming levity of Ulysses, in the moment when he is going to begin the slaughter.

BOOK XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, with some little assistance from Temelachus, Eumæus, and Philœtius, slays all the suitors, and twelve of the female servants who had allowed themselves an illicit intercourse with them, are hanged. Melanthius also is punished with miserable mutilation.

THEN, girding up his rags, Ulysses sprang
With bow and full-charged quiver to the door;
Loose on the broad stone at his feet he pour'd
His arrows, and the suitors thus bespake.

This prize, though difficult, hath been achieved. 5
Now for another mark which never man
Struck yet, but I will strike it if I may,
And if Apollo make that glory mine.

He said, and at Antinoüs aimed direct
A bitter shaft; he, purposing to drink, 10
Both hands advanced toward the golden cup
Twin-ear'd, nor aught suspected death so nigh.
For who, at the full banquet, could suspect
That any single guest, however brave,
Should plan his death, and execute the blow? 15
Yet him Ulysses with an arrow pierced
Full in the throat, and through his neck behind
Started the glittering point. Aslant he droop'd;
Down fell the goblet, through his nostrils flew
The spouted blood, and spurning with his foot 20
The board, he spread his viands in the dust.

Confusion, when they saw Antinoüs fall'n,
Seized all the suitors; from the thrones they sprang,
Flew every way, and on all sides explored
The palace-walls, but neither sturdy lance 25
As erst, nor buckler could they there discern.
Then, furious, to Ulysses thus they spake.

Thy arrow, stranger, was ill-aim'd ; a man
Is no just mark. Thou never shalt dispute
Prize more. Inevitable death is thine. 30
For thou hast slain a Prince noblest of all
In Ithaca, and shalt be vultures' food.

Various their judgments were, but none believed
That he had slain him wittingly, nor saw
The infatuate men fate hovering o'er them all. 35
Then thus Ulysses, louring dark, replied

O dogs ! not fearing aught my safe return
From Ilium, ye have shorn my substance close,
Lain with my women forcibly, and sought,
While yet I lived, to make my consort yours, 40
Heedless of the inhabitants of heaven
Alike, and of the just revenge of man.
But death is on the wing ; death for you all.

He said ; their cheeks all faded at the sound,
And each with sharpen'd eyes search'd every nook 45
For an escape from his impending doom,
Till thus, alone, Eurymachus replied.

If thou indeed art he, the mighty Chief
Of Ithaca return'd, thou hast rehearsed
With truth the crimes committed by the Greeks 50
Frequent, both in thy house and in thy field.

But he, already, who was cause of all,
Lies slain, Antinoüs ; he thy palace fill'd
With outrage, not solicitous so much
To win the fair Penelope, but thoughts 55

Far different framing, which Saturnian Jove
Hath baffled all ; to rule himself supreme
In noble Ithaca, when he had kill'd
By an insidious stratagem thy son.

But he is slain. Now therefore spare thy own, 60
Thy people ; public reparation due

Shall sure be thine, and to appease thy wrath
For all the waste that, eating, drinking here
We have committed, we will yield thee, each,
Full twenty beeves, gold paying thee beside 65
And brass, till joy shall fill thee at the sight,
However just thine anger was before.

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.

Eurymachus, would ye contribute each
His whole inheritance, and other sums 70
Still add beside, ye should not, even so,
These hands of mine bribe to abstain from blood,
Till every suitor suffer for his wrong.
Ye have your choice. Fight with me, or escape
(Whoever may) the terrors of his fate, 75
But ye all perish, if my thought be true.
He ended, they with trembling knees and hearts
All heard, whom thus Eurymachus address'd.
To your defence, my friends! for respite none
Will he to his victorious hands afford, 80
But arm'd with bow and quiver, will dispatch
Shafts from the door till he have slain us all.
Therefore to arms—draw each his sword—oppose
The tables to his shafts, and all at once
Rush on him; that dislodging him at least 85
From portal and from threshold, we may give
The city on all sides a loud alarm,
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.
Thus saying he drew his brazen faulchion keen
Of double edge, and with a dreadful cry 90
Sprang on him; but Ulysses with a shaft,
In that same moment through his bosom driven,
Transfix'd his liver, and down dropp'd his sword.
He, staggering around his table, fell
Convolved in agonies, and overturn'd 95
Both food and wine; his forehead smote the floor;
Woe fill'd his heart, and spurning with his heels
His vacant seat, he shook it till he died.
Then with his faulchion drawn, Amphinomus
Advanced to drive Ulysses from the door, 100
And fierce was his assault; but, from behind,
Telemachus between his shoulders fix'd
A brazen lance, and urg'd it through his breast,
Full on his front, with hideous sound, he fell.
Leaving the weapon planted in his spine 105
Back flew Telemachus, lest had he stood
Drawing it forth, some enemy, perchance,
Should either pierce him with a sudden thrust
Oblique, or hew him with a downright edge.

Swift, therefore, to his father's side he ran,
Whom reaching, in wing'd accents thus he said. 110

My father! I will now bring thee a shield,
An helmet, and two spears: I will enclose
Myself in armour also, and will give
Both to the herdsmen and Eumæus arms 115
Expedient now, and needful for us all.

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Run; fetch them, while I yet have arrows left,
Lest, single, I be justled from the door.

He said, and at his word, forth went the Prince, 120
Seeking the chamber where he had secured

The armour. Thence he took four shields, eight spears,
With four hair-crested helmets, charged with which
He hasted to his father's side again,

And, arming first himself, furnish'd with arms 125
His two attendants. Then, all clad alike
In splendid brass, beside the dauntless Chief
Ulysses, his auxiliars firm they stood.

He while a single arrow unemploy'd
Lay at his foot, right-aiming, ever pierced 130
Some suitor through, and heaps on heaps they fell.

But when his arrows fail'd the royal Chief,
His bow reclining at the portal's side
Against the palace-wall, he slung himself
A four-fold buckler on his arm, he fix'd 135

A casque whose crest waved awful o'er his brows
On his illustrious head, and fill'd his gripe
With two stout spears, well-headed both with brass.

There was a certain postern in the wall
At the gate-side,¹ the customary pass 140
Into a narrow street, but barr'd secure.

Ulysses bade his faithful swine-herd watch
That egress, station'd near it, for it own'd

¹ If the ancients found it difficult to ascertain clearly the situation of this *προσθύρη*, well may we. The Translator has given it the position which to him appeared most probable.—There seem to have been two of these posterns, one leading to a part from which the town might be alarmed, the other to the chamber to which Telemachus went for armour. There was one, perhaps, on each side of the portal, and they appear to have been at some height above the floor.

One sole approach ; then Agelaüs loud
Exhorting all the suitors, thus exclaim'd. 145

Oh friends ! will none, ascending to the door
Of yonder postern, summon to our aid
The populace, and spread a wide alarm ?
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.

To whom the keeper of the goats replied 150
Melanthius. Agelaüs ! Prince renown'd !
That may not be. The postern and the gate²
Neighbour too near each other, and to force
The narrow egress were a vain attempt ;
One valiant man might thence repulse us all. 155
But come—myself will furnish you with arms
Fetch'd from above ; for there, as I suppose,
(And not elsewhere) Ulysses and his son
Have hidden them, and there they shall be found.

So spake Melanthius, and ascending sought 160
Ulysses' chambers through the winding stairs
And galleries of the house. Twelve bucklers thence
He took, as many spears, and helmets bright
As many, shagg'd with hair, then swift return'd
And gave them to his friends. Trembled the heart 165
Of brave Ulysses, and his knees, at sight
Of his opposers putting armour on,
And shaking each his spear ; arduous indeed
Now seem'd his task, and in wing'd accents brief
Thus to his son Telemachus he spake. 170

Either some woman of our train contrives
Hard battle for us, furnishing with arms
The suitors, or Melanthius arms them all.

Him answer'd then Telemachus discreet. 175
Father, this fault was mine, and be it charged
On none beside ; I left the chamber-door
Unbarr'd, which, more attentive than myself
Their spy perceived. But haste, Eumæus, shut
The chamber-door, observing well, the while,
If any woman of our train have done 180
This deed, or whether, as I more suspect,
Melanthius, Dolius' son, have given them arms.

Thus mutual they conferr'd ; meantime, again

² At which Ulysses stood.

Melanthius to the chamber flew, in quest
Of other arms. Eumæus, as he went, 185
Mark'd him, and to Ulysses thus he spake.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
Behold, the traitor, whom ourselves supposed,
Seeks yet again the chamber ! Tell me plain,
Shall I, should I superior prove in force, 190
Slay him, or shall I drag him thence to thee,
That he may suffer at thy hands the doom
Due to his treasons perpetrated oft
Against thee, here, even in thy own house ?

Then answer thus Ulysses shrewd return'd. 195
I, with Telemachus, will here immew
The lordly suitors close, rage as they may.
Ye two, the while, bind fast Melanthius' hands
And feet behind his back, then cast him bound
Into the chamber, and (the door secured) 200
Pass underneath his arms a double chain,
And by a pillar's top weigh him aloft
Till he approach the rafters, there to endure,
Living long time, the miseries he hath earned.

He spake ; they prompt obey'd ; together both 205
They sought the chamber, whom the wretch within
Heard not, exploring every nook for arms.
They watching stood the door, from which, at length,
Forth came Melanthius, bearing in one hand
A casque, and in the other a broad shield 210
Time-worn and chapp'd with drought, which in his youth
Warlike Laertes had been wont to bear.

Long time neglected it had lain, till age
Had loosed the sutures of its bands. At once
Both springing on him, seized and drew him in 215
Forcibly by his locks, then cast him down
Prone on the pavement, trembling at his fate.

With painful stricture of the cord his hands
They bound and feet together at his back,
As their illustrious master had enjoind, 220
Then weigh'd him with a double chain aloft,
By a tall pillar to the palace-roof,
And thus, deriding him, Eumæus spake.

Now, good Melanthius, on that fleecy bed

Reclined, as well befits thee, thou wilt watch 225
 All night, nor when the golden dawn forsakes
 The ocean stream, will she escape thine eye,
 But thou wilt duly to the palace drive
 The fattest goats, a banquet for thy friends.

So saying, he left him in his dreadful sling. 230
 Then arming both, and barring fast the door,
 They sought brave Laertiades again.

And now, courageous at the portal stood
 Those four, by numbers in the interior house
 Opposed of adversaries fierce in arms, 235
 When Pallas, in the form and with the voice
 Approach'd of Mentor, whom Laertes' son
 Beheld, and joyful at the sight, exclaim'd.

Help, Mentor! help—now recollect a friend
 And benefactor, born when thou wast born. 240

So he, not unsuspicious that he saw
 Pallas, the heroine of heaven. Meantime
 The suitors fill'd with menaces the dome,
 And Agelaüs first, Damaster's son,
 In accents harsh rebuked the Goddess thus. 245

Beware, oh Mentor! that he lure thee not
 To oppose the suitors and to aid himself,
 For thus will we. Ulysses and his son
 Both slain, in vengeance of thy purposed deeds
 Against us, we will slay *thee* next, and thou 250
 With thy own head shalt satisfy the wrong,
 Your force thus quell'd in battle, all thy wealth
 Whether in house or field, mingled with his,
 We will confiscate, neither will we leave
 Or son of thine, or daughter in thy house 255
 Alive, nor shall thy virtuous consort more
 Within the walls of Ithaca be seen.

He ended, and his words with wrath inflamed
 Minerva's heart the more; incensed, she turn'd
 Toward Ulysses, whom she thus reproved. 260

Thou neither own'st the courage nor the force,
 Ulysses now, which nine whole years thou show'dst
 At Ilium, waging battle obstinate
 For high-born Helen, and in horrid fight
 Destroying multitudes, till thy advice 265

At last laid Priam's bulwark'd city low.
Why, in possession of thy proper home
And substance, mourn'st thou want of power to oppose
The suitors? Stand beside me, mark my deeds,
And thou shalt own Mentor Alcimides 270
A valiant friend, and mindful of thy love.

She spake; nor made she victory as yet
Entire his own, proving the valour, first,
Both of the sire and of his glorious son,
But springing in a swallow's form aloft, 275
Perch'd on a rafter of the splendid roof.
Then, Agelaüs animated loud

The suitors, whom Eurynomus also roused,
Amphimedon, and Demoptolemus,
And Polycitorides, Pisander named, 280
And Polybus the brave; for noblest far
Of all the suitor chiefs who now survived
And fought for life were these. The bow had quell'd
And shafts, in quick succession sent, the rest.
Then Agelaüs thus harangued them all. 285

We soon shall tame, O friends, this warrior's might,
Whom Mentor, after all his airy vaunts
Hath left, and at the portal now remain
Themselves alone. Dismiss not therefore, all,
Your spears together, but with six alone 290
Assail them first; Jove willing, we shall pierce
Ulysses, and subduing him, shall slay
With ease the rest; their force is safely scorn'd.

He ceased; and, as he bade, six hurl'd the spear
Together; but Minerva gave them all 295
A devious flight; one struck a column, one
The planks of the broad portal, and a third
Flung right his ashen beam ponderous with brass
Against the wall.³ Then (every suitor's spear
Eluded). thus Ulysses gave the word— 300

Now friends! I counsel you that ye dismiss
Your spears at *them*, who not content with past
Enormities, thirst also for our blood.

He said, and with unerring aim all threw

³ The deviation of three only is described, which must be understood therefore, as instances of the ill success of all.

Their glittering spears. Ulysses on the ground
 Stretch'd Demoptolemus ; Euryades
 Fell by Telemachus ; the swine-herd slew
 Elätus, and the keeper of the beeves
 Pisander ; in one moment all alike
 Lay grinding with their teeth the dusty floor.
 Back flew the suitors to the farthest wall,
 On whom those valiant four advancing, each
 Recover'd quick his weapon from the dead.
 Then hurl'd the desperate suitors yet again
 Their glittering spears, but Pallas gave to each
 A frustrate course ; one struck a column, one
 The planks of the broad portal, and a third
 Flung full his ashen beam against the wall.
 Yet pierced Amphimedon the Prince's wrist,
 But slightly, a skin-wound, and o'er his shield
 Ctesippus reach'd the shoulder of the good
 Eumæus, but his glancing weapon swift
 O'rflew the mark, and fell. And now the four,
 Ulysses, dauntless Hero, and his friends
 All hurl'd their spears together in return.
 Himself Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
 Wounded Eurydamus ; Ulysses' son
 Amphimedon ; the swine-herd Polybus ;
 And in his breast the keeper of the beeves
 Ctesippus, glorying over whom, he cried.
 Oh son of Polytherses ! whose delight
 Hath been to taunt and jeer, never again
 Boast foolishly, but to the Gods commit
 Thy tongue, since they are mightier far than thou.
 Take this—a compensation for thy pledge
 Of hospitality, the huge ox-hoof,
 Which while he roam'd the palace, begging alms,
 Ulysses at thy bounteous hand received.
 So gloried he ; then grasping still his spear,
 Ulysses pierced Damastor's son, and next
 Telemachus, enforcing his long beam
 Sheer through his bowels and his back, transpierced
 Leiocritus ; he prostrate smote the floor.
 Then Pallas from the lofty roof held forth
 Her host-confounding Ægis o'er their heads,

Withering their souls with fear. They through the hall
 Fled, scatter'd as an herd, which rapid-wing'd
 The gad-fly dissipates, infester fell
 Of beeves, when vernal suns shine hot and long.
 But, as when bow-beak'd vultures crooked-claw'd 350
 Stoop from the mountains on the smaller fowl;
 Terrified at the toils which spread the plain,
 The flock takes wing, they, darting from above,
 Strike, seize, and slay, resistance or escape
 Is none, the fowler's heart leaps with delight;⁴ 355
 So they, pursuing through the spacious hall
 The suitors, smote them on all sides, their heads
 Sounded beneath the sword, with hideous groans
 The palace rang, and the floor foam'd with blood.
 Then flew Leiodes to Ulysses' knees, 360
 Which clasping, in wing'd accents thus he cried.

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me! Never have I word
 Injurious spoken, or injurious deed
 Attempted 'gainst the women of thy house, 365
 But others, so transgressing, oft forbad.
 Yet they abstain'd not, and a dreadful fate
 Due to their wickedness have therefore found.
 But I, their soothsayer alone, must fall,
 Though unoffending; such is the return 370
 By mortals made for benefits received!

To whom Ulysses, louring-dark, replied.
 Is that thy boast? Hast thou indeed for these
 The seer's high office fill'd? Then doubtless oft
 Thy prayer hath been that distant far might prove 375
 The day delectable of my return,
 And that my consort might thy own become
 To bear thee children; wherefore thee I doom
 To a dire death which thou shalt not avoid.

So saying, he caught the faulchion from the floor 380

⁴ In this simile we seem to have a curious account of the ancient manner of fowling. The nets (for *ρέεα* is used in that sense by Aristophanes) were spread on a plain; on an adjoining rising ground were stationed they who had charge of the vultures (such Homer calls them), which were trained to the sport. The alarm being given to the birds below, the vultures were loosed, when if any of them escaped their talons, the nets were ready to enclose them. See Eustathius. Dacier. Clarke.

Which Agelaüs had let fall, and smote
 Leiodes, while he kneel'd, athwart his neck
 So suddenly, that ere his tongue had ceased
 To plead for life, his head was in the dust.
 But Phemius, son of Terpius, bard divine, 385
 Who, through compulsion, with his song regaled
 The suitors, a like dreadful death escaped.
 Fast by the postern, harp in hand, he stood,
 Doubtful if, issuing, he should take his seat
 Beside the altar of Hercæan Jove,⁵ 390
 Where oft Ulysses offer'd, and his sire,
 Fat thighs of beeves, or whether he should haste,
 An earnest suppliant, to embrace his knees.
 That course, at length, most pleased him; then between
 The beaker and an argent studded throne 395
 He grounded his sweet lyre, and seizing fast
 The Hero's knees, him suppliant thus address'd.

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me. Thou shalt not escape
 Regret thyself hereafter, if thou slay 400
 Me, charmer of the woes of Gods and men.
 Self-taught am I, and treasure in my mind
 Themes of all argument from heaven inspired,
 And I can sing to thee as to a God.
 Ah then, behead me not! Put even the wish 405
 Far from thee! for thy own beloved son
 Can witness, that not drawn by choice, or driven
 By stress of want, resorting to thine house
 I have regaled these revellers so oft,
 But under force of mightier far than I. 410

So he; whose words soon as the sacred might
 Heard of Telemachus, approaching quick
 His father, thus humane he interposed.

Hold—Harm not with the vengeful faulchion's edge
 This blameless man; and we will also spare 415
 Medon the herald, who hath ever been
 A watchful guardian of my boyish years,
 Unless Philœtius have already slain him,
 Or else Eumæus, or thyself, perchance,

⁵ So called because he was worshipped within the 'Ερκος, or wall that surrounded the court.

Unconscious in the tumult of our foes.

420

He spake, whom Medon hearing (for he lay
Beneath a throne and in a new-stript hide
Enfolded, trembling with the dread of death,)
Sprang from his hiding-place, and casting off
The skin, flew to Telemachus, embraced
His knees, and in wing'd accents thus exclaim'd.

425

Prince! I am here—oh pity me! repress
Thine own, and pacify thy father's wrath,
That he destroy not me, through fierce revenge
Of their iniquities who have consumed
His wealth, and in their folly scorn'd his son.

430

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied,
Smiling complacent. Fear not; my own son
Hath pleaded for thee. Therefore (taught thyself
That truth) teach others the superior worth
Of benefits with injuries compared.
But go ye forth, thou and the sacred bard,
That ye may sit distant in yonder court
From all this carnage, while I give command
Myself concerning it, to those within.

435

440

He ceased; they going forth, took each his seat
Beside Jove's altar, but with careful looks
Suspicious, dreading without cease the sword.
Meantime Ulysses search'd his hall in quest
Of living foes, if any still survived
Unpunish'd; but he found them all alike
Weltering in dust and blood; numerous they lay
Like fishes when they strew the sinuous shore
Of Ocean, from the grey gulf drawn aground
In nets of many a mesh; they on the sands
Lie spread, athirst for the salt wave, till hot
The gazing sun dries all their life away;
So lay the suitors heap'd, and thus at length
The prudent Chief gave order to his son.

445

450

455

Telemachus, bid Euryclea come
Quickly, the nurse, to whom I would impart
The purpose which now occupies me most.

He said; obedient to his sire, the Prince
Smote on the door, and summon'd loud the nurse.

Arise, thou ancient governess of all

460

Our female menials, and come forth ; attend
My father ; he hath somewhat for thine ear.

So he ; nor flew his words useless away,
For throwing wide the portal, forth she came,
And by Telemachus conducted, found 465
Ere long Ulysses amid all the slain,
With blood defiled and dust ; dread he appear'd
As from the pastured ox newly-devour'd
The lion stalking back ; his ample chest
With gory drops and his broad cheeks are hung, 470
Tremendous spectacle ; such seem'd the Chief,
Blood-stain'd all over. She the carnage spread
On all sides seeing, and the pools of blood,
Felt impulse forcible to publish loud
That wondrous triumph ; but her lord repress'd 475
The shout of rapture ere it burst abroad,
And in wing'd accents thus his will enforced.

Silent exult, O ancient matron dear !
Shout not, be still. Unholy is the voice
Of loud thanksgiving over slaughter'd men. 480
Their own atrocious deeds and the Gods' will
Have slain all these ; for whether noble guest
Arrived or base, they scoff'd at all alike,
And for their wickedness have therefore died.
But say ; of my domestic women, who 485
Have scorn'd me, and whom find'st thou innocent ?

To whom good Euryclea thus replied.
My son ! I will declare the truth ; thou keep'st
Female domestics fifty in thy house,
Whom we have made intelligent to comb 490
The fleece, and to perform whatever task.
Of these, twice six have overpass'd the bounds
Of modesty, respecting neither me,
Nor yet the Queen ; and thy own son, adult
So lately, no permission had from her 495
To regulate the women of her train.
But I am gone, I fly with what hath pass'd
To the Queen's ear, who nought suspects, so sound
She sleeps, by some divinity composed.

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd. 500
Hush, and disturb her not. Go. Summon first

Those wantons, who have long deserved to die.

He ceased ; then issued forth the ancient dame
To summon those bad women, and, meantime,
Calling his son, Philoctius, and Eumæus,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus began.

505

Bestir ye, and remove the dead ; command
Those women also to your help ; then cleanse
With bibulous sponges and with water all
The seats and tables ; when ye shall have thus
Set all in order, lead those women forth,
And in the centre of the spacious court,
Between the scullery and the outer-wall
Smite them with your broad faulchions till they lose
In death the memory of their secret loves
Indulged with wretches lawless as themselves.

510

515

He ended, and the damsels came at once
All forth, lamenting, and with tepid tears
Showering the ground ; with mutual labour, first,
Bearing the bodies forth into the court,
They lodged them in the portico ; meantime
Ulysses stern enjoin'd them haste, and urged
By sad necessity, they bore all out.

520

With sponges and with water next they cleansed
The thrones and tables, while Telemachus
Besom'd the floor, Eumæus in that work
Aiding him and the keeper of the beeves,
And those twelve damsels bearing forth the soil.
Thus order given to all within, they next
Led forth the women, whom they shut between
The scullery and the outer-wall in close
Durance, from which no prisoner could escape,
And thus Telemachus discreet began.

525

530

An honourable death is not for these
By my advice, who have so often heap'd
Reproach on mine and on my mother's head,
And held lewd commerce with the suitor-train.

535

He said, and noosing a strong galley-rope
To an huge column, led the cord around
The spacious dome, suspended so aloft
That none with quivering feet might reach the floor.
As when a flight of doves entering the copse,

540

Or broad-wing'd thrushes, strike against the net
 Within, ill rest entangled there they find,
 So they, suspended by the neck, expired 545
 All in one line together. Death abhorr'd!
 With restless feet awhile they beat the air,
 Then ceased. And now through vestibule and hall
 They led Melanthius forth. With ruthless steel
 They pared away his ears and nose, pluck'd forth 550
 His parts of shame, destined to feed the dogs,
 And still indignant, lopp'd his hands and feet.
 Then, laving each his feet and hands, they sought
 Again Ulysses; all their work was done,
 And thus the Chief to Euryclea spake. 555
 Bright blast-averting sulphur, nurse, bring fire!
 That I may fumigate my walls; then bid
 Penelope with her attendants down,
 And summon all the women of her train.
 But Euryclea thus his nurse replied. 560
 My son! thou hast well said; yet will I first
 Serve thee with vest and mantle. Stand not here
 In thy own palace clothed with tatters foul
 And beggarly,—she will abhor the sight.
 Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd. 565
 Not so. Bring fire for fumigation first.
 He said; nor Euryclea his loved nurse
 Longer delay'd, but sulphur brought and fire,
 When he with purifying steams himself
 Visited every part, the banquet-room, 570
 The vestibule, the court. Ranging meantime
 His house magnificent, the matron call'd
 The women to attend their Lord in haste,
 And they attended, bearing each a torch.
 Then gather'd they around him all, sincere 575
 Welcoming his return; with close embrace
 Enfolding him, each kiss'd his brows, and each
 His shoulders, and his hands lock'd fast in hers.
 He irresistible the impulse felt
 To sigh and weep, well recognizing all. 580

BOOK XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, with some difficulty, convinces Penelope of his identity, who, at length, overcome by force of evidence, receives him to her arms with transport. He entertains her with a recital of his adventures, and in his narration the principal events of the poem are recapitulated. In the morning, Ulysses, Telemachus, the herdsman, and the swine-herd, depart into the country.

AND now, with exultation loud the nurse
 Again ascended, eager to apprise
 The Queen of her Ulysses' safe return ;
 Joy braced her knees, with nimbleness of youth
 She stepp'd, and at her ear, her thus bespake. 5
 Arise, Penelope ! dear daughter, see
 With thy own eyes thy daily wish fulfill'd.
 Ulysses is arriv'd ; hath reach'd at last
 His native home, and all those suitors proud
 Hath slaughter'd, who his family distress'd, 10
 His substance wasted, and control'd his son.
 To whom Penelope discreet replied.
 Dear nurse ! the Gods have surely taken away
 Thy judgment ; they transform the wise to fools,
 And fools conduct to wisdom, and have marr'd 15
 Thy intellect, who wast discreet before.
 Why wilt thou mock me, wretched as I am,
 With tales extravagant ? and why disturb
 Those slumbers sweet that seal'd so fast mine eyes ?
 For such sweet slumbers have I never known 20
 Since my Ulysses on his voyage sail'd
 To that bad city never to be named.
 Down instant to thy place again—begone—
 For had another of my maidens dared
 Disturb my sleep with tidings wild as these, 25

I had dismiss'd her down into the house
More roughly ; but thine age excuses *thee*.

To whom the venerable matron thus.

I mock thee not, my child ; no—he is come—
Himself, Ulysses, even as I say,
That stranger, object of the scorn of all.
Telemachus well knew his sire arrived,
But prudently concealed the tidings, so
To ensure the more the suitors' punishment.

30

So Euryclea ; she transported heard,
And springing from the bed, wrapp'd in her arms
The ancient woman, shedding tears of joy,
And in wing'd accents ardent thus replied.

35

Ah then, dear nurse, inform me ! tell me true !
Hath he indeed arrived as thou declarest ?
How dared he to assail alone that band
Of shameless ones, for ever swarming here ?

40

Then Euryclea thus matron beloved.

I nothing saw or knew ; but only heard
Groans of the wounded ; in the interior house
We trembling sat, and every door was fast.
Thus all remain'd, till by his father sent,
Thy own son call'd me forth. Going I found
Ulysses compass'd by the slaughter'd dead.
They cover'd wide the pavement, heaps on heaps.
It would have cheer'd thy heart to have beheld
Thy husband lion-like with crimson stains
Of slaughter and of dust all dappled o'er.
Heap'd in the portal, at this moment, lie
Their bodies, and he fumigates meantime
The house with sulphur and with flames of fire,
And hath himself sent me to bid thee down.
Follow me then, that ye may give your hearts
To gladness both, for ye have much endured ;
But the event, so long your soul's desire,
Is come ; himself hath to his household Gods
Alive return'd, thee and his son he finds
Unharm'd and at your home, nor hath he left
Unpunish'd one of all his enemies.

45

50

55

60

Her answer'd then Penelope discreet.
Ah dearest nurse ! indulge not to excess

65

This dangerous triumph. Thou art well apprized
How welcome his appearance here would prove
To all, but chief to me and to his son,
Fruit of our love. But these things are not so ;
Some God, resentful of their evil deeds,
And of their biting contumely severe,
Hath slain those proud ; for whether noble guest
Arrived or base, alike they scoff'd at all,
And for their wickedness have therefore died.
But my Ulysses distant far, I know,
From Greece hath perish'd, and returns no more.

70

75

To whom thus Euryclea, nurse beloved.
What word, my daughter, hath escaped thy lips,
Who thus affirm'st thy husband, now within
And at his own hearth-side, for ever lost ?
Canst thou be thus incredulous ? Hear again—
I give thee yet proof past dispute, his scar
Imprinted by a wild-boar's ivory tusk.
Laving him I remark'd it, and desired,
Myself, to tell thee, but he, ever wise,
Compressing with both hands my lips, forbade.
Come, follow me. My life shall be the pledge.
If I deceive thee, kill me as thou wilt.

80

85

To whom Penelope discreet replied.
Ah, dearest nurse, sagacious as thou art,
Thou little know'st to scan the counsels wise
Of the eternal Gods. But let us seek
My son, however, that I may behold
The suitors dead, and him by whom they died.

90

95

So saying, she left her chamber, musing much,
In her descent, whether to interrogate
Her lord apart, or whether to imprint,
At once, his hands with kisses and his brows.
O'erpassing light the portal-step of stone,
She enter'd. He sat opposite, illumed
By the hearth's sprightly blaze, and close before
A pillar of the dome, waiting with eyes
Downcast, till viewing him, his noble spouse
Should speak to him ; but she sat silent long,
Her faculties in mute amazement held.
By turns she rivetted her eyes on his,

100

105

And, seeing him so foul attired, by turns
 She recognized him not ; then spake her son
 Telemachus, and her silence thus reproved.

110

My mother ! ah my hapless and my most
 Obdurate mother ! wherefore thus aloof
 Shunn'st thou my father, neither at his side
 Sitting affectionate, nor uttering word ?
 Another wife lives not who could endure
 Such distance from her husband new-return'd
 To his own country in the twentieth year,
 After much hardship : but thy heart is still
 As ever, less impressible than stone.

115

To whom Penelope discreet replied.
 I am all wonder, O my son ! my soul
 Is stunn'd within me ; power to speak to him
 Or to interrogate him have I none,
 Or even to look on him ; but if indeed
 He be Ulysses, and have reach'd his home,
 I shall believe it soon, by proof convinced
 Of signs, known only to himself and me.

120

125

She said ; then smiled the Hero toil-inured,
 And in wing'd accents thus spake to his son.

Leave thou, Telemachus, thy mother here
 To sift and prove me ; she will know me soon
 More certainly ; she sees me ill-attired
 And squalid now ; therefore she shews me scorn,
 And no belief hath yet that I am he.

130

But we have need, thou and myself, of deep
 Deliberation. If a man have slain
 One only citizen, who leaves behind
 Few interested to avenge his death,
 Yet flying he forsakes both friends and home ;
 But we have slain the noblest Princes far
 Of Ithaca, on whom our city most
 Depended ; therefore, I advise thee, think !

135

140

Him, prudent, then answer'd Telemachus.

Be that thy care, my father ! for report
 Proclaims *thee* shrewdest of mankind, with whom
 In ingenuity may none compare.
 Lead thou ; to follow thee shall be our part
 With prompt alacrity ; nor shall, I judge,

145

Courage be wanting to our utmost force.

Thus then replied Ulysses, ever-wise. 150

To me the safest counsel and the best
Seems this. First wash yourselves, and put ye on
Your tunics ; bid ye next the maidens take
Their best attire, and let the bard divine
Harping melodious play a sportive dance, 155
That whether passenger or neighbour hear,
All may imagine nuptials held within.

So shall not loud report that we have slain
All those, alarm the city till we gain

Our woods and fields, where once arrived, such plans 160
We will devise, as Jove shall deign to inspire.

He spake, and all obedient in the bath
First laved themselves, then put their tunics on ;
The damsels also dress'd, and the sweet bard
Harping melodious, kindled strong desire 165
In all of jocund song and graceful dance.

The palace under all its vaulted roof
Remurmur'd to the feet of sportive youths
And cinctured maidens, while no few abroad,
Hearing such revelry within, remark'd ;— 170

The Queen with many wooers, weds at last.
Ah fickle and unworthy fair ! too frail
Always to keep inviolate the house
Of her first Lord, and wait for his return.

So spake the people ; but they little knew 175
What had befallen. Eurynome, meantime,
With bath and unction served the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, and he saw himself attired
Royally once again in his own house.

Then Pallas over all his features shed 180
Superior beauty, dignified his form
With added amplitude, and pour'd his curls
Like hyacinthine flowers down from his brows.

As when some artist by Minerva made
And Vulcan, wise to execute all tasks 185
Ingenious, borders silver with a wreath
Of gold, accomplishing a graceful work,
Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest
Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows,

He, godlike, stepping from the bath, resumed, 190
 His former seat magnificent, and sat
 Opposite to the Queen, to whom he said.

Penelope! the Gods to thee have given
 Of all thy sex, the most obdurate heart.
 Another wife lives not who could endure 195
 Such distance from her husband new-return'd
 To his own country in the twentieth year,
 After such hardship. But prepare me, nurse,
 A bed, for solitary I must sleep,
 Since she is iron, and feels not for me. 200

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
 I neither magnify thee, sir! nor yet
 Depreciate thee, nor is my wonder such
 As hurries me at once into thy arms,
 Though my remembrance perfectly retains, 205
 Such as he was, Ulysses, when he sail'd
 On board his bark from Ithaca—Go, nurse,
 Prepare his bed, but not within the walls
 Of his own chamber built with his own hands.
 Spread it without, and spread it well with warm 210
 Mantles, with fleeces, and with richest rugs.

So spake she, proving him¹, and, not untouch'd
 With anger at that word; thus he replied.

Penelope, that order grates my ear.
 Who hath displaced my bed? the task were hard 215
 Even to an artist; other than a God
 None might with ease remove it; as for man,
 It might defy the stoutest, in his prime
 Of youth, to heave it to a different spot,
 For in that bed elaborate, a sign, 220
 A special sign consists; I was myself
 The artificer; I fashion'd it alone.
 Within the court a leafy olive grew
 Lofty, luxuriant, pillar-like in girth.
 Around this tree I built, with massy stones 225

¹ The proof consisted in this—that the bed being attached to the stump of an olive tree still rooted, was immoveable, and Ulysses having made it himself, no person present, he must needs be apprized of the impossibility of her orders, if he were indeed Ulysses; accordingly, this demonstration of his identity satisfies all her scruples.

Cemented close, my chamber, roof'd it o'er,
And hung the glutinated portals on.
I lopp'd the ample foliage and the boughs,
And severing near the root its solid bole,
Smooth'd all the rugged stump with skilful hand, 230
And wrought it to a pedestal well squared
And modell'd by the line. I wimbled, next,
The frame throughout, and from the olive-stump
Beginning, fashion'd the whole bed above
Till all was finish'd, plated o'er with gold, 235
With silver, and with ivory, and beneath
Close interlaced with purple cordage strong.
Such sign I give thee. But if still it stand
Unmoved, or if some other, severing sheer
The olive from its bottom, have displaced 240
My bed—that matter is best known to thee.

He ceased; she, conscious of the sign so plain
Given by Ulysses, heard with fluttering heart
And faltering knees that proof. Weeping she ran
Direct toward him, threw her arms around 245
The Hero, kiss'd his forehead, and replied.

Ah my Ulysses! pardon me—frown not—
Thou who at other times hast ever shown
Superior wisdom! all our griefs have flow'd
From the Gods' will; they envied us the bliss 250
Of undivided union sweet enjoy'd
Through life, from early youth to latest age.
No. Be not angry now; pardon the fault
That I embraced thee not as soon as seen,
For horror hath not ceased to overwhelm 255
My soul, lest some false alien should, perchance,
Beguile me, for our house draws numerous such.
Jove's daughter, Argive Helen, ne'er had given
Free entertainment to a stranger's love,
Had she foreknown that the heroic sons 260
Of Greece would bring her to her home again.
But heaven incited her to that offence,
Who never, else, had even in her thought
Harbour'd the foul enormity, from which
Originated even our distress. 265
But now, since evident thou hast described

Our bed, which never mortal yet beheld,
Ourselves except and Actoris my own
Attendant, given me when I left my home
By good Icarius, and who kept the door,
Though hard to be convinced, at last I yield. 270

So saying, she awaken'd in his soul
Pity and grief; and folding in his arms
His blameless consort beautiful, he wept.
Welcome as land appears to those who swim, 275
Whose gallant bark Neptune with rolling waves
And stormy winds hath sunk in the wide sea,
A mariner or two, perchance, escape
The foamy flood, and swimming reach the land,
Weary indeed, and with incrusted brine 280
All rough, but oh, how glad to climb the coast!
So welcome in her eyes Ulysses seem'd,
Around whose neck winding her snowy arms,
She clung as she would loose him never more.
Thus had they wept till rosy-finger'd morn 285
Had found them weeping, but Minerva check'd
Night's almost finish'd course, and held, meantime,
The golden dawn close prisoner in the Deep,
Forbidding her to lead her coursers forth,
Lampus and Phaëthon that furnish light 290
To all the earth, and join them to the yoke.
Then thus Ulysses to Penelope.

My love! we have not yet attain'd the close
Of all our sufferings, but unmeasured toil
Arduous remains, which I must still achieve. 295
For so the spirit of the Theban seer
Inform'd me, on that day, when to enquire
Of mine and of my people's safe return
I journey'd down to Pluto's drear abode.
But let us hence to bed, there to enjoy 300
Tranquil repose. My love, make no delay.

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
Thou shalt to bed at whatsoever time
Thy soul desires, since the immortal Gods
Give thee to me and to thy home again. 305
But thou hast spoken from the seer of Thebes
Of arduous toils yet unperform'd; declare

What toils ? Thou wilt disclose them, as I judge,
Hereafter, and why not disclose them now ?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

310

Ah conversant with woe ! why would'st thou learn
That tale ? but I will tell it thee at large.

Thou wilt not hear with joy, nor shall myself
With joy rehearse it ; for he bade me seek

City after city, bearing, as I go,

315

A shapely oar, till I shall find, at length,
A people who the sea know not, nor eat
Food salted ; they trim galley crimson-prow'd
Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth-shaven oar
With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves.

320

He gave me also this authentic sign,
Which I will tell thee. In what place so'er
I chance to meet a traveller who shall name
The oar on my broad shoulder borne, a van ;²

He bade me, planting it on that same spot,
Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,

325

A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek
My home again, and sacrifice at home

An hecatomb to the immortal Gods,
Inhabitants of the expanse above.

330

So shall I die, at length, the gentlest death
Remote from Ocean ; it shall find me late,

In soft serenity of age, the Chief

Of a blest people.—Thus he prophesied.

Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.

335

If heaven appoint thee in old age a lot

More tranquil, hope thence springs of thy escape
Some future day from all thy threaten'd woes.

Such was their mutual conference sweet ; meantime

Eurynome and Euryclea dress'd

340

Their bed by light of the clear torch, and when

Dispatchful they had spread it broad and deep,

The ancient nurse to her own bed retired.

Then came Eurynome, to whom in trust

The chambers appertain'd, and with a torch

345

Conducted them to rest ; she introduced

The happy pair, and went ; transported they

² See the note on the same passage, Book xi.

To rites connubial intermitted long,
 And now recover'd gave themselves again.³
 Meantime, the Prince, the herdsman, and the good 350
 Eumæus, giving rest each to his feet,
 Ceased from the dance ; they made the women cease
 Also, and to their several chambers all
 Within the twilight edifice repair'd.

At length with conjugal endearment both 355
 Satiated, Ulysses tasted and his spouse
 The sweets of mutual converse. She rehearsed,
 Noblest of women, all her numerous woes
 Beneath that roof sustain'd, while she beheld
 The profligacy of the suitor-throng, 360
 Who in their wooing had consumed his herds
 And fatted flocks, and drawn his vessels dry ;
 While brave Ulysses, in his turn, to her
 Related his successes and escapes,
 And his afflictions also ; he told her all ; 365
 She listen'd charm'd, nor slumber on his eyes
 Fell once, or ere he had rehearsed the whole.
 Beginning, he discoursed, how at the first
 He conquer'd in Ciconia, and thence reach'd
 The fruitful shores of the Lotophagi ; 370
 The Cyclops' deeds he told her next, and how
 He well avenged on him his slaughter'd friends
 Whom, pitiless, the monster had devour'd.
 How to the isle of Æolus he came,
 Who welcomed him and safe dismiss'd him thence, 375
 Although not destined to regain so soon
 His native land ; for o'er the fishy deep
 Loud tempests snatch'd him sighing back again.
 How, also at Telepylus he arrived,
 Town of the Læstrygonians, who destroy'd 380
 His ships with all their mariners, his own
 Except, who in his sable bark escaped.
 Of guileful Circe too he spake, deep-skill'd
 In various artifice, and how he reach'd

³ Aristophanes the grammarian and Aristarchus chose that the *Odyssey* should end here ; but the story is not properly concluded till the tumult occasioned by the slaughter of so many Princes being composed, Ulysses finds himself once more in peaceable possession of his country.

With sails and oars the squalid realms of death, 385
 Desirous to consult the prophet there,
 Theban Tiresias, and how there he view'd
 All his companions, and the mother bland
 Who bare him, nourisher of his infant years.
 How next he heard the Sirens in one strain 390
 All chiming sweet, and how he reach'd the rocks
 Erratic, Scylla and Charybdis dire,
 Which none secure from injury may pass.
 Then how the partners of his voyage slew
 The Sun's own bees, and how the Thunderer Jove 395
 Hurl'd down his smoky bolts into his bark,
 Depriving him at once of all his crew,
 Whose dreadful fate he yet himself escaped.
 How to Ogygia's isle he came, where dwelt
 The nymph Calypso, who enamour'd wish'd 400
 To espouse him, and within her spacious grot
 Detain'd, and fed, and promised him a life
 Exempt for ever from the sap of age,
 But him moved not. How also he arrived,
 After much toil, on the Phæacian coast, 405
 Where every heart revered him as a God,
 And whence, enriching him with brass and gold,
 And costly raiment first, they sent him home.
 At this last word, oblivious slumber sweet
 Fell on him, dissipating all his cares. 410
 Meantime, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
 On other thoughts intent, soon as she deem'd
 Ulysses with connubial joys sufficed,
 And with sweet sleep, at once from Ocean roused
 The golden-axled chariot of the morn 415
 To illumine earth. Then from his fleecy couch
 The Hero sprang, and thus his spouse enjoin'd.
 Oh consort dear! already we have striven
 Against our lot till wearied with the toil,
 My painful absence thou with ceaseless tears 420
 Deploring, and myself in deep distress
 Withheld reluctant from my native shores
 By Jove and by the other powers of heaven.
 But since we have in this delightful bed
 Met once again, watch thou and keep secure 425

All my domestic treasures, and ere long
I will replace my numerous sheep destroy'd
By those imperious suitors, and the Greeks
Shall add yet others till my folds be fill'd.
But to the woodlands go I now—to see
My noble father, who for my sake mourns
Continual; as for thee, my love, although
I know thee wise, I give thee thus in charge.
The sun no sooner shall ascend, than fame
Shall wide divulge the deed that I have done,
Slaying the suitors under my own roof.
Thou, therefore, with thy maidens sit retired
In thy own chamber at the palace-top,
Nor question ask, nor curious look abroad.

430

435

He said, and covering with his radiant arms
His shoulders, call'd Telemachus; he roused
Eumæus and the herdsman too, and bade
All take their martial weapons in their hands.
Not disobedient they, as he enjoin'd,
Put armour on, and issued from the gates,
Ulysses at their head. The earth was now
Enlighten'd, but Minerva them in haste
Led forth into the fields, unseen by all.

440

445

BOOK XXIV.

A R G U M E N T.

Mercury conducts the souls of the suitors down to Ades. Ulysses discovers himself to Laertes, and quells, by the aid of Minerva, an insurrection of the people resenting the death of the suitors.

AND now Cyllenian Hermes summon'd forth
 The spirits of the suitors ; waving wide
 The golden wand of power to seal all eyes
 In slumber, and to ope them wide again,
 He drove them gibbering¹ down into the shades. 5
 As when the bats within some hallow'd cave
 Flit squeaking all around, for if but one
 Fall from the rock, the rest all follow him,
 In such connexion mutual they adhere ;
 So, after bounteous Mercury, the ghosts 10
 Troop'd downward, gibbering¹ all the dreary way.
 The Ocean's flood and the Leucadian rock,
 The Sun's gate also and the land of Dreams
 They pass'd, whence next into the meads they came
 Of Asphodel, by shadowy forms possess'd, 15
 Simulars of the dead. They found the souls
 Of brave Pelides there, and of his friend
 Patroclus, of Antilochus renown'd,
 And of the mightier Ajax, for his form
 And bulk (Achilles sole except) of all 20
 The sons of the Achaians most admired.
 These waited on Achilles. Then appear'd
 The mournful ghost of Agamemnon, son
 Of Atreus, compass'd by the ghosts of all

¹ *Τοῖζεσαι—τερριψῶναι—*
 —the ghosts

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

Who shared his fate beneath Ægisthus' roof, 25
And him the ghost of Peleus' son bespake.

Atrides ! of all Heroes we esteem'd
Thee dearest to the Gods, for that thy sway
Extended over such a glorious host
At Ilium, scene of sorrow to the Greeks. 30
But Fate, whose ruthless force none may escape
Of all who breathe, pursued thee from the first.
Thou should'st have perish'd full of honour, full
Of royalty, at Troy ; so all the Greeks
Had raised thy tomb, and thou hadst then bequeath'd 35
Great glory to thy son ; but Fate ordain'd
A death, oh how deplorable ! for thee.

To whom Atrides' spirit thus replied.
Blest son of Peleus, semblance of the Gods,
At Ilium, far from Argos fallen ! for whom 40
Contending, many a Trojan, many a Chief
Of Greece died also, while in eddies whelm'd
Of dust thy vastness² spread the plain, nor thee
The chariot aught or steed could interest more !
All day we waged the battle, nor at last 45
Desisted, but for tempests sent from Jove.
At length, we bore into the Grecian fleet
Thy body from the field ; there first we cleansed
With tepid baths, and oil'd thy shapely corse,
Then placed thee on thy bier, while many a Greek 50
Around thee wept, and shore his locks for thee.

Thy mother also, hearing of thy death,
With her immortal nymphs from the abyss
Arose and came ; terrible was the sound
On the salt flood ; a panic seized the Greeks, 55
And every warrior had return'd on board
That moment, had not Nestor, ancient Chief,
Illumed by long experience, interposed ;
His counsels, ever-wisest, wisest proved
Then also, and he thus address'd the host. 60

Sons of Achaia, fly not ; stay, ye Greeks !
Thetis arrives with her immortal nymphs
From the abyss, to visit her dead son.

² —Behemoth, biggest born of earth,
Upheaved his vastness. MILTON.

So he ; and, by his admonition stay'd,
The Greeks fled not. Then all around thee stood 65
The daughters of the Ancient of the Deep,
Mourning disconsolate ; with heavenly robes
They clothed thy corse, and all the Muses nine
Deplored thee in full choir with sweetest tones
Responsive, nor one Grecian hadst thou seen 70
Dry-eyed, such grief the Muses moved in all.
Full seventeen days we day and night deplored
Thy death, both Gods in heaven and men below ;
But on the eighteenth day, we gave thy corse
Its burning, and fat sheep around thee slew 75
Numerous, with many a pastured ox moon-horn'd.
We burn'd thee clothed in vesture of the Gods,
With honey and with oil feeding the flames
Abundant, while Achaia's Heroes arm'd,
Both horse and foot, encompassing thy pile, 80
Clash'd on their shields, and deafening was the din.
But when the fires of Vulcan had at length
Consumed thee, at the dawn we stored thy bones
In unguent and in undiluted wine ;
For Thetis gave to us a golden vase 85
Twin-ear'd, which she profess'd to have received
From Bacchus, work divine of Vulcan's hand.
Within that vase, Achilles, treasured lie
Thine and the bones of thy departed friend
Patroclus, but a separate urn we gave 90
To those of brave Antilochus, who most
Of all thy friends at Ilium shared thy love
And thy respect, thy friend Patroclus slain
Around both urns we piled a noble tomb
(We warriors of the sacred Argive host), 95
On a tall promontory shooting far
Into the spacious Hellespont, that all
Who live, and who shall yet be born, may view
Thy record, even from the distant waves.
Then, by permission from the Gods obtain'd, 100
To the Achaian Chiefs in circus met,
Thetis appointed games. I have beheld
The burial rites of many a Hero bold,
When on the death of some great Chief, the youths

- Girding their loins anticipate the prize,
But sight of those with wonder fill'd me most,
So glorious past all others were the games
By silver-footed Thetis given for thee,
For thou wast ever favour'd of the Gods.
Thus hast thou not, Achilles! although dead,
Forgone thy glory, but thy fair report
Is universal among all mankind;
But as for me, what recompense had I,
My warfare closed? for whom, at my return,
Jove framed such dire destruction by the hands
Of fell Ægisthus and my murderess wife. 110
- Thus mutual they conferr'd; meantime approach'd,
Swift messenger of heaven, the Argicide,
Conducting thither all the shades of those
Slain by Ulysses. At that sight amazed,
Both moved toward them. Agamemnon's shade 120
Knew well Amphimedon, for he had been
Erewhile his father's guest in Ithaca,
And thus the spirit of Atreus' son began.
- Amphimedon! by what disastrous chance,
Coævals as ye seem, and of an air 125
Distinguish'd all, descend ye to the Deeps?
For not the chosen youths of a whole town
Should form a nobler band. Perish'd ye sunk
Amid vast billows and rude tempests raised 130
By Neptune's power? or on dry land through force
Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off
Beeves from the herd, or driving flocks away?
Or fighting for your city and your wives?
Resolve me; I was once a guest of yours. 135
Remember'st not what time at your abode
With godlike Menelaüs I arrived,
That we might win Ulysses with his fleet
To follow us to Troy? scarce we prevail'd
At last to gain the city-waster Chief, 140
And after all, consumed a whole month more
The wide sea traversing from side to side.
- To whom the spirit of Amphimedon.
Illustrious Agamemnon, King of men!
All this I bear in mind, and will rehearse 145

The manner of our most disastrous end.
Believing brave Ulysses lost, we woo'd
Meantime his wife ; she our detested suit
Would neither ratify nor yet refuse,
But, planning for us a tremendous death, 150
This novel stratagem, at last, devised.
Beginning in her own recess, a web
Of slenderest thread, and of a length and breadth
Unusual, thus the suitors she address'd.

Princes, my suitors ! since the noble Chief 155
Ulysses is no more, enforce not yet
My nuptials ; wait till I shall finish first
A funeral robe (lest all my threads decay),
Which for the ancient Hero I prepare,
Laertes, looking for the mournful hour 160
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest ;
Else I the censure dread of all my sex,
Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.

So spake the Queen ; we, unsuspecting all,
With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day 165
She wove the ample web, and by the aid
Of torches ravell'd it again at night.

Three years she thus by artifice our suit
Eluded safe, but when the fourth arrived,
And the same season, after many moons 170
And fleeting days return'd, a damsel then
Of her attendants, conscious of the fraud,
Reveal'd it, and we found her pulling loose

The splendid web. Thus, through constraint, at length
She finish'd it, and in her own despite. 175

But when the Queen produced, at length, her work
Finish'd, new-blanch'd, bright as the sun or moon,
Then came Ulysses, by some adverse God
Conducted to the cottage on the verge
Of his own fields, in which his swine-herd dwells ; 180

There also the illustrious Hero's son
Arrived soon after, in his sable bark
From sandy Pylus borne ; they plotting both
A dreadful death for all the suitors, sought
Our glorious city, but Ulysses last, 185
And first Telemachus. The father came,

Conducted by his swine-herd, and attired
 In tatters foul ; a mendicant he seem'd,
 Time-worn, and halted on a staff. So clad,
 And entering on a sudden, he escaped 190
 All knowledge even of our eldest there,
 And we reviled and smote him ; he, although
 Beneath his own roof smitten and reproach'd,
 With patience suffer'd it awhile, but roused
 By inspiration of Jove ægis-arm'd 195
 At length, in concert with his son convey'd
 To his own chamber his resplendent arms,
 There lodged them safe, and barr'd the massy doors.
 Then, in his subtlety, he bade the Queen
 A contest institute with bow and rings 200
 Between the hapless suitors, whence ensued
 Slaughter to all. No suitor there had power
 To overcome the stubborn bow that mock'd
 All our attempts ; and when the weapon huge
 At length was offer'd to Ulysses' hands, 205
 With clamour'd menaces we bade the swain
 Withhold it from him, plead he as he might ;
 Telemachus alone, with loud command,
 Bade give it him, and the illustrious Chief
 Receiving in his hand the bow, with ease 210
 Bent it, and sped a shaft through all the rings.
 Then springing to the portal steps, he pour'd
 The arrows forth, peer'd terrible around,
 Pierced King Antinoüs, and aiming sure
 His deadly darts, pierced others after him, 215
 Till in one common carnage heap'd we lay.
 Some God, as plain appear'd, vouchsafed them aid,
 Such ardour urged them, and with such dispatch
 They slew us on all sides ; hideous were heard
 The groans of dying men fell'd to the earth 220
 With head-strokes rude, and the floor swam with blood.
 Such, royal Agamemnon ! was the fate
 By which we perish'd, all whose bodies lie
 Unburied still, and in Ulysses' house,
 For tidings none hath yet our friends alarm'd 225
 And kindred, who might cleanse from sable gore
 Our clotted wounds, and mourn us on the bier,

Which are the rightful privilege of the dead.

Him answer'd, then, the shade of Atreus' son.

Oh happy offspring of Laertes! shrewd 230

Ulysses! matchless valour thou hast shewn,

Recovering thus thy wife; nor less appears

The virtue of Icarius' daughter wise,

The chaste Penelope, so faithful found

To her Ulysses, husband of her youth. 235

His glory, by superior merit earn'd,

Shall never die, and the immortal Gods

Shall make Penelope a theme of song

Delightful in the ears of all mankind.

Not such was Clytemnestra, daughter vile 240

Of Tyndarus; she shed her husband's blood,

And shall be chronicled in song a wife

Of hateful memory, by whose offence

Even the virtuous of her sex are shamed.

Thus they, beneath the vaulted roof obscure 245

Of Pluto's house, conferring mutual stood.

Meantime, descending from the city-gates,

Ulysses, by his son and by his swains

Follow'd, arrived at the delightful farm

Which old Laertes had with strenuous toil 250

Himself long since acquired. There stood his house,

Encompass'd by a bower, in which the hinds

Who served and pleased him, ate, and sat, and slept.

An ancient woman, a Sicilian, dwelt

There also, who in that sequester'd spot 255

Attended diligent her aged Lord.

Then thus Ulysses to his followers spake.

Haste now, and entering, slay ye of the swine

The best for our regale; myself the while,

Will prove my father, if his eye hath still 260

Discernment of me, or if absence long

Have worn the knowledge of me from his mind.

He said, and gave into his servants' care

His arms; they swift proceeded to the house,

And to the fruitful grove himself as swift 265

To prove his father. Down he went at once

Into the spacious garden-plot, but found

Nor Dolius there, nor any of his sons

Or servants ; they were occupied elsewhere,
And with the ancient hind himself, employ'd 270
Collecting thorns with which to fence the grove.
In that umbrageous spot he found alone
Laertes, with his hoe clearing a plant;
Sordid his tunic was, with many a patch
Mended unseemly ; leathern were his greaves, 275
Thong-tied and also patch'd, a frail defence
Against sharp thorns, while gloves secured his hands
From briar-points, and on his head he bore
A goat-skin casque, nourishing hopeless woe.
No sooner then the Hero toil-inured . 280
Saw him age-worn and wretched, than he paused
Beneath a lofty pear-tree's shade to weep.
There standing, much he mused, whether, at once,
Kissing and clasping in his arms his sire,
To tell him all, by what means he had reach'd 285
His native country, or to prove him first.
At length he chose as his best course, with words
Of seeming strangeness to accost his ear,
And with that purpose, moved direct toward him.
He stooping low, loosen'd the earth around 290
A garden-plant, when his illustrious son
Now standing close beside him, thus began.
Old sir ! thou art no novice in these toils
Of culture, but thy garden thrives ; I mark
In all thy ground no plant, fig, olive, vine, 295
Pear-tree or flower-bed suffering through neglect.
But let it not offend thee if I say
That thou neglect'st thyself, at the same time
Oppress'd with age, sun-parch'd, and ill-attired.
Not for thy inactivity, methinks, 300
Thy master slights thee thus, nor speaks thy form
Or thy surpassing stature servile aught
In thee, but thou resemblest more a King.
Yes—thou resemblest one who, bathed and fed,
Should softly sleep ; such is the claim of age. 305
But tell me true—for whom labourest thou,
And whose this garden ? answer me beside,
For I would learn ; have I indeed arrived
In Ithaca, as one whom here I met

Even now assured me, but who seem'd a man 310
Not overwise, refusing both to hear
My questions, and to answer when I ask'd
Concerning one in other days my guest
And friend, if he have still his being here,
Or have deceased and journey'd to the shades? 315
For I will tell thee; therefore mark. Long since
A stranger reach'd my house in my own land,
Whom I with hospitality received,
Nor ever sojourn'd foreigner with me
Whom I loved more. He was by birth, he said, 320
Ithacan, and Laertes claim'd his sire,
Son of Arcesias. Introducing him
Beneath my roof, I entertain'd him well,
And proved by gifts his welcome at my board.
I gave him seven talents of wrought gold, 325
A goblet, argent all, with flowers emboss'd,
Twelve single cloaks, twelve carpets, mantles twelve
Of brightest lustre, with as many vests,
And added four fair damsels, whom he chose
Himself, well born and well accomplish'd all. 330
Then thus his ancient sire weeping replied.
Stranger! thou hast in truth attain'd the isle
Of thy enquiry, but it is possess'd
By a rude race, and lawless. Vain, alas!
Were all thy numerous gifts; yet hadst thou found 335
Him living here in Ithaca, with gifts
Reciprocated he had sent thee hence,
Requiting honourably in his turn
Thy hospitality. But give me quick
Answer, and true. How many have been the years 340
Since thy reception of that hapless guest
My son? for mine, my own dear son was he.
But him, far distant both from friends and home,
Either the fishes of the unknown Deep
Have eaten, or wild beasts and fowls of prey. 345
Nor I, or she who bare him, was ordain'd
To bathe his shrouded body with our tears,
Nor his chaste wife, well-dower'd Penelope,
To close her husband's eyes, and to deplore
His doom, which is the privilege of the dead. 350

But tell me also thou, for I would learn,
Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from whom?
The bark in which thou and thy godlike friends
Arrived, where is she anchor'd on our coast?
Or camest thou only passenger on board 355
Another's bark, who landed thee and went?

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
I will with all simplicity relate
What thou hast ask'd. Of Alybas am I,
Where in much state I dwell, son of the rich 360
Apheidias, royal Polypemon's son,
And I am named Eperitus; by storms
Driven from Sicily I have arrived,
And yonder, on the margin of the field
That skirts your city, I have moor'd my bark. 365
Five years have pass'd since thy Ulysses left,
Unhappy Chief! my country; yet the birds
At his departure hover'd on the right,
And in that sign rejoicing, I dismiss'd
Him thence rejoicing also, for we hoped 370
To mix in social intercourse again,
And to exchange once more pledges of love.

He spake; then sorrow as a sable cloud
Involved Laertes; gathering with both hands
The dust, he pour'd it on his reverend head 375
With many a piteous groan. Ulysses' heart
Commotion felt, and his stretch'd nostrils throbb'd
With agony close-pent, while fix'd he eyed
His father; with a sudden force he sprang
Toward him, clasp'd, and kiss'd him, and exclaim'd. 380

My father! I am he. Thou seest thy son
Absent these twenty years at last return'd.
But bid thy sorrows cease; suspend henceforth
All lamentation; for I tell thee true,
(And the occasion bids me briefly tell thee) 385
I have slain all the suitors at my home,
And all their taunts and injuries avenged.

Then answer thus Laertes quick return'd.
If thou hast come again, and art indeed
My son Ulysses, give me then the proof 390
Indubitable, that I may believe.

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
View, first, the scar which with his ivory tusk
A wild boar gave me, when at thy command
And at my mother's, to Autolycus 395
Her father, on Parnassus, I repair'd,
Seeking the gifts which, while a guest of yours,
He promised should be mine. Accept beside
This proof. I will enumerate all the trees
Which, walking with thee in this cultured spot 400
(Boy then), I begg'd, and thou confirm'dst my own.
We paced between them, and thou madest me learn
The name of each. Thou gavest me thirteen pears³,
Ten apples³, thirty figs³, and fifty ranks
Did promise me of vines, their alleys all 405
Corn-cropp'd between. There oft as sent from Jove
The influences of the year descend,
Grapes of all hues and flavours clustering hang.

He said; Laertes conscious of the proofs
Indubitable by Ulysses given, 410
With faltering knees and faltering heart both arms
Around him threw. The Hero toil-inured
Drew to his bosom close his fainting sire,
Who, breath recovering, and his scatter'd powers
Of intellect, at length thus spake aloud. 415

Ye Gods! oh then your residence is still
On the Olympian heights, if punishment
At last hath seized on those flagitious men.
But terror shakes me, lest, incensed, ere long
All Ithaca flock hither, and dispatch 420
Swift messengers with these dread tidings charged
To every Cephallenian state around.

Him answer'd then Ulysses ever wise.
Courage! fear nought, but let us to the house
Beside the garden, whither I have sent 425
Telemachus, the herdsman, and the good
Eumæus to prepare us quick repast.

So they conferr'd, and to Laertes' house
Pass'd on together; there arrived, they found

³ The fruit is here used for the tree that bore it, as it is in the Greek; the Latins used the same mode of expression, neither is it uncommon in our own language.

Those three preparing now their plenteous feast, 430
And mingling sable wine ; then, by the hands
Of his Sicilian matron, the old King
Was bathed, anointed, and attired afresh,
And Pallas, drawing nigh, dilated more
His limbs, and gave his whole majestic form 435
Increase of amplitude. He left the bath.
His son, amazed as he had seen a God
Alighted newly from the skies, exclaim'd.

My father ! doubtless some immortal Power
Hath clothed thy form with dignity divine. 440

Then thus replied his venerable sire.
Jove ! Pallas ! Phœbus ! oh that I possess'd
Such vigour now, as when in arms I took
Nericus, continental city fair,
With my brave Cephallenians ! oh that such 445
And arm'd as then, I yesterday had stood
Beside thee in thy palace, combating
Those suitors proud, then had I strew'd the floor
With numerous slain, to thy exceeding joy.

Such was their conference ; and now, the task 450
Of preparation ended, and the feast
Set forth, on couches and on thrones they sat,
And ranged in order due, took each his share.
Then ancient Dolius, and with him his sons
Arrived toil-worn, by the Sicilian dame 455
Summon'd, their cateress, and their father's kind
Attendant ever in his eve of life.

They, seeing and recalling soon to mind
Ulysses, in the middle mansion stood
Wondering, when thus Ulysses with a voice 460
Of some reproof, but gentle, them bespake.

Old servant, sit and eat, banishing fear
And mute amazement ; for, although provoked
By appetite, we have long time abstain'd,
Expecting every moment thy return. 465

He said ; then Dolius with expanded arms
Sprang right toward Ulysses, seized his hand,
Kiss'd it, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Oh master ever dear ! since thee the Gods
Themselves, in answer to our warm desires, 470

Have, unexpectedly, at length restored,
Hail, and be happy, and heaven make thee such !
But say, and truly ; knows the prudent Queen
Already thy return, or shall we send
Ourselves an herald with the joyful news ?

475

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
My ancient friend, thou may'st release thy mind
From that solicitude ; she knows it well.

So he ; then Dolius to his glossy seat
Return'd, and all his sons gathering around
Ulysses, welcomed him and grasp'd his hand,
Then sat beside their father ; thus beneath
Laertes' roof they, joyful, took repast.

480

But Fame with rapid haste the city roam'd
In every part, promulging in all ears
The suitors' horrid fate. No sooner heard
The multitude that tale, than one and all
Groaning they met and murmuring before
Ulysses' gates. Bringing the bodies forth,
They buried each his friend, but gave the dead
Of other cities to be ferried home
By fishermen on board their rapid barks.

485

All hasted then to council ; sorrow wrung
Their hearts, and the assembly now convened,
Arising first Eupithes spake, for grief
Sat heavy on his soul, grief for the loss
Of his Antinoüs, by Ulysses slain
Foremost of all, whom mourning, thus he said.

490

My friends ! no trivial fruits the Grecians reap
Of this man's doings. *Those* he took with him
On board his barks, a numerous train and bold,
Then lost his barks, lost all his numerous train,
And *these*, our noblest, slew at his return.
Come therefore—ere he yet escape by flight
To Pylus or to noble Elis, realm

500

Of the Epeans, follow him ; else shame
Attends us and indelible reproach.

505

If we avenge not on these men the blood
Of our own sons and brothers, farewell then
All that makes life desirable ; my wish

510

Henceforth shall be to mingle with the shades.

Oh then pursue and seize them ere they fly.

Thus he with tears, and pity moved in all.

Then, Medon and the sacred bard whom sleep

Had lately left, arriving from the house

515

Of Laertiades, approach'd ; amid

The throng they stood ; all wonder'd seeing them,

And Medon, prudent senior, thus began.

Hear me, my countrymen ! Ulysses plann'd

With no disapprobation of the Gods

520

The deed that ye deplore. I saw, myself,

A Power immortal at the Hero's side,

In semblance just of Mentor ; now the God,

In front apparent, led him on, and now,

From side to side of all the palace, urged

525

To flight the suitors ; heaps on heaps they fell.

He said ; then terror wan seized every cheek,

And Halitherses, Hero old, the son

Of Mastor, who alone among them all

Knew past and future, prudent, thus began.

530

Now, O ye men of Ithaca ! my words

Attentive hear ! by your own fault, my friends,

This deed hath been perform'd ; for when myself

And noble Mentor counsell'd you to check

The sin and folly of your sons, ye would not.

535

Great was their wickedness, and flagrant wrong

They wrought, the wealth devouring, and the wife

Dishonouring of an illustrious Chief

Whom they deem'd destined never to return.

But hear my counsel. Go not, lest ye draw

540

Disaster down and woe on your own heads.

He ended ; then with boisterous roar (although

Part kept their seats) upsprang the multitude,

For Halitherses pleased them not, they chose

Eupithes' counsel rather ; all at once

545

To arms they flew, and clad in dazzling brass,

Before the city form'd their dense array.

Leader infatuate, at their head appear'd

Eupithes, hoping to avenge his son

Antinoüs, but was himself ordain'd

550

To meet his doom, and to return no more.

Then thus Minerva to Saturnian Jove.

Oh father ! son of Saturn ! Jove supreme !
Declare the purpose hidden in thy breast.
Wilt thou that this hostility proceed,
Or wilt thou grant them amity again ?

555

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
Why asks my daughter ? didst thou not design
Thyself, that brave Ulysses coming home
Should slay those profligates ? act as thou wilt,
But thus I counsel. Since the noble Chief
Hath slain the suitors, now let peace ensue
Oath-bound, and reign Ulysses evermore !
The slaughter of their brethren and their sons
To strike from their remembrance, shall be ours.
Let mutual amity, as at the first,
Unite them, and let wealth and peace abound.

560

565

So saying, he animated to her task
Minerva prompt before, and from the heights
Olympian down to Ithaca she flew,
Meantime Ulysses (for their hunger now
And thirst were sated) thus address'd his hind.

570

Look ye abroad, lest haply they approach.
He said, and at his word forth went a son
Of Dolius ; at the gate he stood, and thence
Beholding all that multitude at hand,
In accents wing'd thus to Ulysses spake.

575

They come—they are already arrived—arm all !
Then, all arising, put their armour on,
Ulysses with his three, and the six sons
Of Dolius ; Dolius also with the rest
Arm'd and Laertes, although silver-hair'd,
Warriors perforce. When all were clad alike
In radiant armour, throwing wide the gates
They sallied, and Ulysses led the way.
Then Jove's own daughter Pallas, in the form
And with the voice of Mentor, came in view,
Whom seeing Laertiades rejoiced,
And thus Telemachus, his son, bespake.

580

585

Now, oh my son ! thou shalt observe, untold
By me, where fight the bravest. Oh shame not
Thine ancestry, who have in all the earth
Proof given of valour in all ages past.

590

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.

My father! if thou wish that spectacle,
Thou shalt behold thy son as thou hast said,
In nought dishonouring his noble race.

595

Then was Laertes joyful, and exclaim'd,
What sun hath risen to day? "oh blessed Gods!
My son and grandson emulous dispute
The prize of glory, and my soul exults.

600

He ended, and Minerva, drawing nigh
To the old King, thus counsell'd him. Oh friend
Whom most I love, son of Arcesias; prayer
Preferring to the virgin azure-eyed,
And to her father, Jove, delay not, shake
Thy lance in air, and give it instant flight.

605

So saying, the Goddess nerved his arm anew.
He sought in prayer the daughter dread of Jove,
And brandishing it, hurl'd his lance; it struck
Eupithes, pierced his helmet brazen-cheek'd,
That stay'd it not, but forth it sprang beyond,
And with loud clangor of his arms he fell.

610

Then flew Ulysses and his noble son
With faulchion and with spear of double edge
To the assault, and of them all had left
None living, none had to his home return'd,
But that Jove's virgin daughter with a voice
Of loud authority thus quell'd them all.

615

Peace, O ye men of Ithaca! while yet
The field remains undeluged with your blood.

620

So she, and fear at once paled every cheek.
All trembled at the voice divine; their arms
Escaping from the grasp fell to the earth,
And covetous of longer life, each fled
Back to the city. Then Ulysses sent

625

His voice abroad, and with an eagle's force
Sprang on the people; but Saturnian Jove
Cast down, incontinent, his smouldering bolt
At Pallas' feet, and thus the Goddess spake.

630

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
Forbear; abstain from slaughter; lest thyself

⁴ *Τίς νύ μοι ἡμέρη ἦδε;*—So Cicero, who seems to translate it—*Proh dii immortales! Quis hic illuxit dies!* See Clarke in loco.

Incur the anger of high-thundering Jove.

So Pallas, whom Ulysses glad obey'd.

Then faithful covenants of peace between

Both sides ensued, ratified in the sight

Of Pallas, progeny of Jove, who seemed,

In voice and form, the Mentor known to all.

635

THE
BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE.
TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH BLANK VERSE.

DESCEND all Helicon into my breast!
 Oh every virgin of the tuneful choir
 Breathe on my song which I have newly traced
 In tables open'd on my knees, a song
 Of bloodiest note—terrible deeds of Mars, 5
 Well worthy of the ears of all mankind,
 Whom I desire to teach, how, erst, the Mice
 Assail'd the Frogs, mimicking in exploit
 The prowess of the giant race earth-born.
 The rumour once was frequent in the mouths 10
 Of mortal men, and thus the strife began.

A thirsty Mouse (thirsty with fear and flight
 From a cat's claws) sought out the nearest lake,
 Where dipping in the flood his downy chin,
 He drank delighted. Him the frog far-famed 15
 Limnocharis¹ espied, and thus he spake.

Who art thou, stranger? Whence hast thou arrived
 On this our border, and who gave thee birth?
 Beware thou trespass not against the truth;
 Lie not! for should I find thy merit such 20
 As claims my love, I will conduct thee hence
 To my abode, where gifts thou shalt receive
 Liberal and large, with hospitable fare.
 I am the King Physignathus², revered
 By the inhabitants of all this pool, 25

¹ The beauty of the lake,

² The pouter.

Chief of the frogs for ever. Me, long since,
 Peleus³ begat, embracing on the banks
 Of the Eridanus my mother fair,
 Hydromedusa⁴. Nor thee less than King
 Or leader bold in fight thy form proclaims, 30
 Stout as it is, and beautiful.—Dispatch—
 Speak therefore, and declare thy pedigree.

He ceased, to whom Psycharpax⁵ thus replied.
 Illustrious sir! wherefore hast thou inquired
 My derivation, known to all, alike 35
 To Gods and men, and to the fowls of heaven?
 I am Psycharpax, and the dauntless Chief
 Troxartes⁶ is my sire, whose beauteous spouse
 Daughter of Pternotroctes⁷ brought me forth,
 Lichomyle⁸ by name. A cave of earth 40
 My cradle was, and, in my youngling state,
 My mother nourish'd me with almonds, figs,
 And delicacies of a thousand names.

But diverse as our natures are, in nought
 Similar, how, alas! can we be friends? 45

The floods are thine abode, while I partake
 With man his sustenance. The basket stored
 With wheaten loaves thrice kneaded, 'scapes not me,
 Nor wafer broad, enrich'd with balmy sweets,
 Nor ham in slices spread, nor liver wrapt 50
 In tunic silver-white, nor curds express'd

From sweetest milk, nor, sweeter still, the full
 Honeycomb, coveted by Kings themselves,
 Nor aught by skilful cook invented yet
 Of sauce or seasoning for delight of man. 55

I am brave also, and shrink not at sound
 Of glorious war, but rushing to the van,
 Mix with the foremost combatants. No fear
 Of man himself shakes me, vast as he is,
 But to his bed I steal, and make me sport, 60
 Nibbling his fingers' end, or with sharp tooth
 Fretting his heel so neatly that he sleeps
 Profound the while, unconscious of the bite.

³ Of or belonging to mud.

⁴ Governess of the waters.

⁵ The crumb-catcher.

⁶ The bread-eater.

⁷ The bacon-eater.

⁸ The lick of mill-stones.

Two things, of all that are, appal me most,
 The owl and cat. These cause me many a pang. 65
 As does the hollow gin insidious, fair
 In promises, but in performance foul,
 Engine of death ! yet most of all I dread
 Cats, nimble mousers, who can dart a paw
 After me, enter at what chink I may. 70
 But to return—your diet, parsley, kail,
 Beet, radish, gourd (for, as I understand,
 Ye eat no other), are not to my taste.

Him then with smiles answer'd Physignathus.
 Stranger ! thou vauntest much thy dainty fare, 75
 But, both on shore and in the lake we boast
 Our dainties also, and such sights as much
 Would move thy wonder ; for by gift from Jove
 We leap as well as swim, can range the land
 For food, or diving, seek it in the Deep. 80
 Would'st thou the proof ? 'tis easy—mount my back—
 There cling as for thy life, and thou shalt share
 With rapture the delights of my abode.

He said, and gave his back. Upsprang the Mouse
 Lightly, and with his arms enfolded fast 85
 The Frog's soft neck. Pleased was he, at the first,
 With view of many a creek and bay, nor less
 With his smooth swimming on whose back he rode.
 But when, at length, the clear wave dash'd his sides,
 Then, fill'd with penitential sorrows vain, 90
 He wept, pluck'd off his hair, and gathering close
 His hinder feet, survey'd with trembling heart
 The novel sight, and wish'd for land again.
 Groans follow'd next, extorted groans, through stress
 Of shivering fear, and, with extended tail 95
 Drawn like a long oar after him, he pray'd
 For land again ; but, while he pray'd, again
 The clear wave dash'd him. Much he shriek'd, and much
 He clamour'd, and, at length thus sorrowing, said.

Oh desperate navigation strange ! not thus 100
 Europa floated to the shores of Crete
 On the broad back of her enamour'd bull.

And now, dread spectacle to both, behold
 An Hydra ! on the lake with crest erect

He rode, and right toward them. At that sight 105
 Down went Physignathus, heedless, alas!
 Through fear, how great a Prince he should destroy.
 Himself at bottom of the pool escaped
 The dreadful death; but, at his first descent
 Dislodged, Psycharpax fell into the flood. 110
 There, stretch'd supine, he clench'd his hands, he shriek'd,
 Plunged oft, and lashing out his heels afar,
 Oft rose again, but no deliverance found.
 At length, oppress'd by his drench'd coat, and soon
 To sink for ever, thus he prophesied. 115

Thou hast released thy shoulders at my cost,
 Physignathus! unfeeling as the rock,
 But not unnoticed by the Gods above.
 Ah worst of traitors! on dry land, I ween,
 Thou hadst not foil'd me, whether in the race 120
 Or wrestling-match, or at whatever game.
 Thou hast by fraud prevail'd, casting me off
 Into the waters; but an eye divine
 Sees all. Nor hope thou to escape the host
 Of Mice, who shall, ere long, avenge the deed. 125

So saying, he sank and died; whom, while he sat
 Reposing on the lake's soft verge, the Mouse
 Lichopinax⁹ observed; aloud he wail'd,
 And flew with those sad tidings to his friends.
 Grief, at the sound, immeasurable seized 130
 On all, and by command, at dawn of day
 The heralds call'd a council at the house
 Of brave Troxartes, father of the Prince
 Now lost, a carcass now, nor nigh to land
 Weltering, but distant in the middle pool. 135
 The multitude in haste convened, uprose
 Troxartes for his son incensed, and said.

Ah friends! although my damage from the Frogs
 Sustain'd be greatest, yet is yours not small.
 Three children I have lost, wretch that I am, 140
 All sons. A merciless and hungry cat,
 Finding mine eldest son abroad, surprised
 And slew him. Lured into a wooden snare
 (New machination of unfeeling man

⁹ The dish-licker.

For slaughter of our race, and named a trap), 145
My second died. And now, as ye have heard,
My third, his mother's and my darling, him
Physignathus hath drown'd in yon abyss.

Haste therefore, and in gallant armour bright
Attired, march forth, ye Mice, now seek the foe. 150

So saying, he roused them to the fight, and Mars
Attendant arm'd them. Splitting first the pods
Of beans which they had sever'd from the stalk
With hasty tooth by night, they made them greaves.
Their corslets were of platted straw, well lined 155
With spoils of an excoriated cat.

The lamp contributed its central tin,
A shield for each. The glittering needle long
Arm'd every gripe with a terrific spear,
And auburn shells of nuts their brows enclosed. 160

Thus arm'd the Mice advanced, of whose approach
The Frogs apprised, emerging from the lake,
All throng'd to council, and considering sat
The sudden tumult and its cause. Then came,
Sceptre in hand, an herald. Son was he 165
Of the renown'd Tyroglyphus,¹⁰ and call'd
Embasichytrus.¹¹ Charged he came to announce
The horrors of approaching war, and said,—

Ye Frogs! the host of Mice send you by me
Menaces and defiance. Arm, they say, 170
For furious fight; for they have seen the Prince
Psycharpax weltering on the waves, and drown'd
By King Physignathus. Ye then, the Chiefs
And leaders of the hosts of Frogs put on
Your armour, and draw forth your bands to battle! 175

He said, and went. Then were the noble Frogs
Troubled at that bold message, and while all
Murmur'd against Physignathus, the King
Himself arising, thus denied the charge.

My friends! I neither drown'd the Mouse, nor saw 180
His drowning. Doubtless, while he strove in sport
To imitate the swimming of the Frogs,
He sank and died. Thus, blame is none in me,
And these injurious slanders do me wrong.

¹⁰ A cheese-rasper.

¹¹ The explorer of pots and pipkins.

Consult we, therefore, how we may destroy 185
 The subtle Mice, which thus we will perform.
 Arm'd and adorn'd for battle, we will wait
 Their coming where our coast is most abrupt.
 Then, soon as they shall rush to the assault,
 Seizing them by the helmet, as they come, 190
 We will precipitate them, arms and all,
 Into the lake; unskilful as they are
 To swim, their suffocation there is sure,
 And we will build a trophy to record
 The great Mouse-massacre for evermore. 195

So saying, he gave commandment, and all arm'd.
 With leaves of mallows each his legs encased,
 Guarded his bosom with a corslet cut
 From the green beet, with foliage tough of kail
 Fashion'd his ample buckler, with a rush 200
 Keen-tipt, of length tremendous, fill'd his gripe,
 And on his brows set fast a cockle-shell.
 Then on the summit of the loftiest bank
 Drawn into phalanx firm they stood, all shook
 Their quivering spears, and wrath swell'd every breast. 205

Jove saw them, and assembling all the Gods
 To council in the skies, Behold, he said,
 Yon numerous hosts, magnanimous, robust,
 And rough with spears, how like the giant race
 They move, or like the Centaurs! smiling, next, 210
 He ask'd, of all the Gods, who favour'd most
 The Mice, and who the Frogs? but at the last,
 Turning toward Minerva, thus he spake.

The Mice, my daughter, need thee; goest thou not
 To aid thy friends the Mice, inmates of thine, 215
 Who to thy temple drawn by savoury steams
 Sacrificial, and day by day refresh'd
 With dainties there, dance on thy sacred floor?

So spake the God, and Pallas thus replied.
 My father! suffer as they may, the Mice 220
 Shall have no aid from me, whom much they wrong,
 Marring my wreaths, and plundering of their oil
 My lamps.—But this, of all their impious deeds,
 Offends me most, that they have eaten holes
 In my best mantle, which with curious art 225

Divine I wove, light, easy, delicate ;
 And now the artificer whom I employ'd
 To mend it, clamouring demands a price
 Exorbitant, which moves me much to wrath,
 For I obtain'd on trust those costly threads, 230
 And have not wherewithal to pay the arrear.
 Nor love I more the Frogs, or purpose more
 To succour even them, since they not less,
 Dolts as they are, and destitute of thought,
 Have incommoded me. For when, of late, 235
 Returning from a fight weary and faint,
 I needed rest, and would have slept, no sleep
 Found I, those ceaseless croakers of the lake,
 Noisy, perverse, forbidding me a wink.
 Sleepless, and with an aching head I lay 240
 Therefore until the crowing of the cock.
 By my advice, then, O ye Gods, move not,
 Nor interfere, favouring either side,
 Lest ye be wounded ; for both hosts alike
 Are valiant, nor would scruple to assail 245
 Even ourselves. Suffice it, therefore, hence
 To view the battle, safe, and at our ease.
 She ceased, and all complied. Meantime, the hosts
 Drew nearer, and in front of each was seen
 An herald, gonfalon in hand ; huge gnats 250
 Through clarions of unwieldy length sang forth
 The dreadful note of onset fierce, and Jove
 Doubled the signal, thundering from above.
 First, with his spear Hypsiboas¹² assail'd
 Lichenor¹³. Deep into his body rush'd 255
 The point, and pierced his liver. Prone he fell,
 And all his glossy down with dust defiled.
 Then, Troglodytes¹⁴ hurl'd his massy spear
 At Pelion¹⁵, which he planted in his chest.
 Down dropp'd the Frog, night whelm'd him, and he died. 260
 Seutlaeus¹⁶, through his heart piercing him, slew
 Embasichytrus. Polyphonus¹⁷ fell

² The loud-croaker.¹³ One addicted to licking.¹⁴ A creeper into holes and crannies.¹⁵ Offspring of the mud.¹⁶ A feeder on beet.¹⁷ The noisy.

Pierced through his belly by the spear of bold
 Artophagus,¹⁸ and prone in dust expired.
 Incensed at sight of Polyphonus slain, 265
 Limnocharis at Troglodytes cast
 A mill-stone weight of rock ; full on the neck
 He batter'd him, and darkness veil'd his eyes.
 At him Lichenor hurl'd a glittering lance,
 Nor err'd, but pierced his liver. Trembling fled 270
 Crambophagus¹⁹ at that dread sight, and plunged
 Over the precipice into the lake,
 Yet even there found refuge none, for brave
 Lichenor following, smote him even there.
 So fell Crambophagus, and from that fall 275
 Never arose, but reddening with his blood
 The wave, and wallowing in the strings and slime
 Of his own vitals, near the bank expired.
 Limnisius²⁰ on the grassy shore struck down
 Tyroglyphus²¹ ; but at the view alone 280
 Of terrible Pternoglyphus²² appall'd,
 Fled Calaminthus²³, cast away his shield
 Afar, and headlong plunged into the lake.
 Hydrocharis²⁴ with a vast stone assail'd
 The King Pternophagus²⁵ ; the rugged mass 285
 Descending on his poll, crush'd it ; the brain
 Oozed through his nostrils drop by drop, and all
 The bank around was spatter'd with his blood.
 Lichopinax with his long spear transpierced
 Borborocoites²⁶ ; darkness veil'd his eyes, 290
 Prassophagus²⁷ with vengeful notice mark'd
 Cnissodiocetes²⁸ ; seizing with one hand
 His foot and with the other hand his neck,
 He plunged, and held him plunged, till drown'd he died.
 Psycharpax standing boldly in defence 295
 Of his slain fellow-warriors, urged his spear
 Right through Pelusius²⁹ : at his feet he fell,
 And, dying, mingled with the Frogs below.

¹⁸ The bread-eater.¹⁹ The cabbage-eater.²⁰ Of the lake.²¹ The cheese-scraper.²² The ham-scraper.²³ So called from the herb calamint.
water.²⁵ The bacon-eater.²⁴ One whose delight is in²⁶ The sleeper in the mud.²⁷ The garlic-eater.²⁸ The savoury steam-hunter.²⁹ The muddy.

Resentful of his death, the mighty Frog
 Pelobates³⁰ an handful cast of mud 300
 Full at Psycharpax ; all his ample front
 He smear'd, and left him scarce a glimpse of day.
 Psycharpax, at the foul dishonour, still
 Exasperate more, upheaving from the ground
 A rock that had incumber'd long the bank, 305
 Hurl'd it against Pelobates ; below
 The knees he smote him, shiver'd his right leg
 In pieces, and outstretch'd him in the dust,
 But him Craugasides³¹, who stood to guard
 The fallen Chief, assail'd ; with his long lance 310
 He prick'd Psycharpax at the waist! the whole
 Keen-pointed rush transpierced his belly, and all
 His bowels following the retracted point,
 O'erspread the ensanguined herbage at his side.
 Soon as Sitophagus³², a crippled mouse, 315
 That sight beheld, limping, as best he could,
 He left the field, and, to avoid a fate
 Not less tremendous, dropp'd into a ditch.
 Troxartes grazed the instep of the bold
 Physignathus, who at the sudden pang 320
 Startled, at once leap'd down into the lake.
 Prasseus³³, at the sight of such a Chief
 Floating in mortal agonies enraged,
 Sprang through his foremost warriors, and dismiss'd
 His pointed rush, but reach'd not through his shield 325
 Troxartes, baffled by the stubborn disk.
 There was a Mouse, young, beautiful and brave
 Past all on earth, son of the valiant Chief
 Artepibulus³⁴. Like another Mars
 He fought, and Meridarpax³⁵ was his name, 330
 A Mouse, among all Mice without a peer.
 Glorying in his might on the lake's verge
 He stood with other Mouse none at his side,
 And swore to extirpate the whole croaking race.

³⁰ The mud-walker.³¹ The hoarse-croaker.³² The cake-eater.³³ One who deals much in garlic.³⁴ One who lies in wait for bread.³⁵ The scrap-catcher.

Nor doubted any but he should perform 335
 His dreadful oath, such was his force in arms,
 Had not Saturnian Jove with sudden note
 Perceived his purpose; with compassion touch'd
 Of the devoted Frogs the Sovereign shook
 His brows, and thus the Deities address'd. 340

I see a prodigy, ye Powers divine!
 And, with no small amazement smitten, hear
 Prince Meridarpax menacing the Frogs
 With general extirpation. Haste—be quick—
 Dispatch we Pallas terrible in fight, 345
 Not her alone, but also Mars, to quell
 With force combined the sanguinary Chief.

So spake the Thunderer, and thus Mars replied.
 Neither the force of Pallas, nor the force
 Of Mars, O Jove! will save the destined Frogs 350
 From swift destruction. Let us all descend
 To aid them, or, lest all suffice not, grasp
 And send abroad thy biggest bolt, thy bolt
 Tempestuous, terror of the Titian race,
 By which those daring enemies thou slew'st, 355
 And dirlst coerce with adamantine chains
 Enceladus, and all that monstrous brood.

He said, and Jove dismiss'd the smouldering bolt.
 At his first thunder, to its base he shook
 The vast Olympian. Then—whirling about 360
 His forky fires, he launch'd them to the ground,
 And, as they left the Sovereign's hand, the heart
 Of every Mouse quaked, and of every Frog.

Yet ceased not, even at that shock, the Mice
 From battle, but with double ardour flew 365
 To the destruction of the Frogs, whom Jove
 From the Olympian heights snow-crown'd again
 Viewing, compassionated their distress,
 And sent them aids. Sudden they came. Broad-back'd
 They were, and smooth like anvils, sickle-claw'd, 370
 Sideling in gait, their mouths with pincers arm'd,
 Shell-clad, crook-knee'd, protruding far before
 Long hands, and horns, with eye-balls in the breast,

Legs in quaternion ranged on either side,
 And Crabs their name. They seizing by his leg,
 His arm, his tail a Mouse, cropp'd it, and snapp'd
 His polish'd spear. Appall'd at such a foe,
 The miserable Mice stood not, but fled
 Heartless, discomfited. And now, the sun
 Descending, closed this warfare of a day.

375

380

THE END.



